

*A Resource Guide for
Low Incidence ELL Districts*

FAMILY, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners

September 2010

This resource guide was developed by members of Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL) with support from the New England Comprehensive Center (NECC). It was developed to address the needs of districts that are just beginning to see the emergence of an English Language Learner (ELL) population in their district or who have very low numbers of ELLs.

The guide is an introduction that highlights key research- or evidence-based practices and is not meant to provide detailed explanations. It provides beginning answers to frequently asked questions, many of which were derived from a survey of CAPELL members from low incidence ELL districts. For more detailed information, the guide includes the references on which most of the answers are based. Other suggestions come from promising practices cited by CAPELL members.

The following pages offer many examples from multiple sources of how to engage parents in general and ELL parents in particular, as well as community organizations and resources, in students' education and in school activities. We encourage you to spend some time in exploring these resources to build or strengthen your own parent/school/community programs and to add to the list from your own experiences. This is intended to be a living document, updated as practice and research evolves.

This is Document 3 in the series A Resource Guide for Low Incidence ELL Districts.

Document 1: Instructional Practices

Document 2: Professional Development and Educator Support

Document 3: Family, School, and Community Involvement

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SCHOOL, FAMILY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Why is it important?

From the research and other literature:

“Educators as well as noneducators often question the value of family involvement. Does it really make a difference? According to the research, the answer is yes. Sometimes, results come in more traditional measures—student achievement, attendance, or behavior. These measures tend to be based in schools and controlled by school staff. At other times, there are less traditional benefits, such as improved student or family self-efficacy about education, higher expectations for students..., more effective ways to support family engagement, greater understanding of the viewpoints of others, or student planning for the future. These measures may be driven by the school, the home, the community, families, or students.

The key is not that the source of additional student support comes from a specific entity, but that students benefit significantly when there is an individual encouraging and expecting the child to be academically successful. In fact, there is evidence that it is not ‘the parent’ that makes the difference, but instead it is adults who take the time to talk to students, express an interest in their education, and hold them accountable for learning. Students of all ages benefit academically, emotionally, and physically when an adult is actively involved in the day-to-day events of their lives, including school activities.”

(The School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture - A Review of Current Literature; p.2;
<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sflitrev.pdf>)

What does this mean for parents of ELLs?

“To say that parental involvement is critical to the success of any program has become an adage; so much so that we often say it without paying proper heed to what it actually means. For programs that serve students who have special characteristics, such as English language learners (ELLs), it is particularly important to think about the why and the how of parental involvement. Given the right kind of environment, parents of ELLs can be involved in the school, and they can become an administrator’s and teacher’s best allies in providing the support that ELLs need at home. ...

Parents of ELLs are often farther away from the community of the school than any other parents within that community. However, their physical absence from the school does not mean they do not support their children’s education. It may simply be a sign that the parents are reluctant or unable to come to school and to participate in their children’s education in this way. Notions of parental involvement and how necessary parental involvement is vary significantly among families and across cultures. For some families, participation in a child’s schooling may mean coming to the school building at least once a week. For others, it may mean making sure that the child has a quiet place in the home to complete homework....

Being a partner in the educational process is a concept that is completely foreign to many ELL parents. It is simply not what ‘good parents’ do in other countries. In most other countries, the school and the parents are not expected to work together as we do in the United States.... In order for parents to become involved in and supportive of their children’s education, they must understand the educational policies, programs, and practices available to their children at school, and they must feel welcome in the school.” *Book: English Language Learners at School: A Guide for Administrators; Chapter Two, p. 35-36 & p. 40*

What does the law say?

According to the U.S. Department of Education's *Non-Regulatory Guidance document on Parental Involvement (Title I, Part A)*:

A-1. What is parental involvement?

“Parental involvement always has been a centerpiece of Title I. However, for the first time in the history of the ESEA, it has a specific statutory definition. The statute defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
- that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
- that other activities are carried out, such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA (Parental Involvement). [Section 9101(32), ESEA.]”

(*Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A*; p. 3; <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc>)

INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The framework for this resource guide is based on the work of Joyce Epstein and a team of researchers at Johns Hopkins University. These researchers have worked with educators, parents, students, community partners, and other researchers for over 20 years to learn how elementary, middle, and high schools develop and maintain programs of school, family and community partnerships.

The framework is described in the guide *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (see reference in the Bibliography section of this guide).

The Connecticut State Board of Education indicated the importance of this framework in a Position Statement adopted November 5, 2003. This statement recommended that schools develop programs related to the six standards excerpted below, standards that parallel Epstein's. The following sections of this resource guide follow these six standards. *[Editor's Note: Although the wording for each standard is exactly as it appears in the position statement, the order of the standards has been changed to reflect the order in which they are addressed in this resource document.]*

- **Communicating** – promote clear two-way communication between the school and families about school programs and children's progress.
- **Parenting** – promote and support parenting skills and the family's primary role in encouraging children's learning at each age and grade level.
- **Learning at home** – involve families in learning activities at home, including interactive homework and other curriculum-linked or enrichment activities.
- **Collaborating with the community** – provide coordinated access to community resources for children and families, and serve as a resource to the community.
- **Volunteering** – provide appropriate training and involve families in instructional and support areas both in and out of the school.
- **Decision making** – provide opportunities for all families to develop and strengthen their leadership role in school decisions.

(Position Statement on School–Family–Community Partnerships, p. 1-2,
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Family/SFCP/pos.pdf>)

The Connecticut State Board of Education subsequently adopted a revised set of these standards in a position statement dated November, 2009, adding clarification and expanding upon the definitions, as excerpted below. In addition, the Board included policy guidance for the position statement, which can be accessed here: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/board/SFCPPolicyGuidance.pdf>.

“The Connecticut State Board of Education believes education is a shared responsibility throughout a student's life from birth to adulthood. Family, school staff and community members make important contributions to student success and the best results come when all three work together as equal partners. ...The State Board of Education endorses a research-based definition of school-family-community partnerships that can be applied to policies and practices across the state that result in student success. School-family-community partnerships are: a shared responsibility with schools and other community organizations committed to engaging families in meaningful, culturally respectful ways ...continuous across a student's life ...and carried out everywhere that children learn.

A Comprehensive Approach: In order to encourage comprehensive school-family-community partnerships, the Board recommends that school districts develop programs addressing each of the following six standards: *[Editor's Note: Again, the wording used below is exactly from the excerpt but the order has been changed to reflect the order the standards are addressed in this resource document.]*

- **Communicating and creating a welcoming climate** – Promote ongoing, clear, meaningful, and two-way communication about school programs and student learning, and develop personal relationships among school staff, families, students and community members.
- **Parent Education** – Identify and prioritize as needed, secondary school completion options and English language learning services for parents of school age children. Support the family’s essential role in encouraging children’s learning at every age and in developing positive parent-child relationships.
- **Supporting learning at home** – Involve families in learning and enrichment activities at home and in the community that are linked to academic standards.
- **Collaborating with community** – Provide coordinated access to community resources, serve as a resource to the community and offer opportunities for community service.
- **Volunteering** – Involve families in instruction and support, both in and out of school, and in creating a family-friendly atmosphere at school.
- **Decision-making and advocacy** – Provide opportunities for families to develop and strengthen their leadership roles in school decisions, especially those related to student performance and school improvement.”

*(Position statement on School-Family-Community Partnerships for Student Success; p. 1-2;
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/board/SFCP.pdf>)*

COMMUNICATING

Q 1: How can our district design effective forms of direct school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and students' progress?

From the research:

Learn about the context of students' homes:

“There is no doubt that contextual factors in the home can either facilitate or stifle home-based support for student learning. There are families who are more comfortable in reaching out to school staff; others are reluctant to do so. When school staff [members] have a better understanding of their students' home cultures, families' parenting practices, home contexts, home crises, or significant family and community events, they can develop processes and strategies to bridge school-based and home-based activities and increase support for student learning.”

(The School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture - A Review of Current Literature; p.14; <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf>)

Help parents open the lines of communication:

“Help all families navigate the educational system. Educators are very skilled at negotiating school environments; however, at times, they forget how foreign and difficult this system can be for new families. Providing parents with key questions to probe student understanding, information on school structures and policies, and other educational issues will help them to successfully work with the system to help meet the needs of their children.”

(Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections? p.5; <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf>)

Additional suggestions and comments from CAPELL members' experiences gathered during meetings, one-on-one exchanges, and received via email:

- The two strategies below aim to open the lines of communication from the parent to the school and district as well as build parents' knowledge of school staff:
 - Parents should be provided with a list of the names of the school and district staff and their contact information such as telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. The list should also indicate the areas of responsibility of the school and district staff so the parent can contact the correct person. Where appropriate, the information sheet should be in multiple languages.
 - Have a message center at the high school that is in Spanish. After parents leave a message, a person who will be hired by the district will respond to their message and thus make it easier for parents to meet with someone at school and ask questions.
- Several strategies in place in Connecticut center on interpreters for parents when the communications are in English. (Note that in general, the use of students to do the interpreting was not condoned by CAPELL members. The student may not understand what is being asked of them or might be biased when it is a question pertaining to their or their siblings' behavior or academic progress. “Most importantly,” it places the parent as a second class citizen in the process.)
 - In some districts, professionals are paid to do the interpreting for parent meetings.
 - In others, ESL teachers find and interview potential interpreters through civic organizations, churches, and colleges.

- In another district, advanced ESL students in the adult education classes are recruited as interpreters. This program has been regionalized and a statewide interpreter list has been created for schools.
- One district takes advantage of the interpretation services offered by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC).
- Two suggestions focus on getting parents involved in their children’s education early:
 - One strategy has been to connect with the parents of ELL preschool students.
 - Another suggestion is to meet with kindergarten parents at the beginning of the school year and continue with monthly meetings.
- Three other suggestions focus on providing easy access to school resources both within the school and where the students live:
 - Parent Resource Centers in schools provide a place for parents to meet with other parents during the school day, including those in the same cultural/language group, to collect printed information, to view educational videos, and to ask questions and get advice. Materials provided by the U.S. Dept. of Education (USED) are often printed in multiple languages and can be distributed here. And if the school remains open into the evening, then parents who work during the day can also have access to these resources.
 - The school environment can be unfamiliar and unwelcoming, and caregivers’ own school-related experiences are varied and even can be negative. Thus, to help break down barriers, at least one district has been trying to have more family meetings outside of the home, such as at a community room of apartment complexes where students live, so that parents don’t have to travel. (Many parents don’t have transportation.) Schools can provide supervised childcare at the facility, or parents can bring their children with them to the meetings.
 - To encourage parents to develop good literacy practices with their children, teachers and a social worker from one elementary school bring books to community rooms of apartment complexes where students live, and then model to parents how to read to and with their children.
- One district believes that a major obstacle preventing immigrant parents from communicating with the school frequently or even when needs arise is the issue of legal and illegal immigration. Districts need to be sensitive to the fact that some parents are fearful of dealing with “authority figures” for fear of consequences if their status is illegal or undocumented.

Suggested Resource:

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)

<http://www.crec.org/>

From the “About” CREC webpage: “Since 1966, the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), working with and for its member districts, has developed a wide array of cost-effective and high-quality programs and services to meet the educational needs of children and adults in the Capitol Region.”

PARENTING SUPPORT & EDUCATION

Q 2: How can we help all families establish home environments to support children as students?

From the research:

“Help families learn strategies to support students’ academic needs. School staff [members] commonly assume that their directions are clear and that family members have the skill and knowledge to perform the tasks they suggest. In reality, families often have limited experience with or skill for the tasks they are asked to perform. However, families can provide effective support for classroom instruction when school staff work with families to help them learn strategies that reinforce classroom learning.

Encourage the development of the total child as this greatly impacts academics. School staff often state that it is not only the academic development of the child that is important to student success, but also the developmental readiness of the child to participate as an active learner. Sleep, food, health, and mental status are just a few of the important issues in this area.”

(The School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture - A Review of Current Literature; p.5; <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf>)

Additional suggestions and comments from CAPELL members’ experiences gathered during meetings, one-on-one exchanges, and received via email:

- One member noted that successful parent involvement programs should be comprehensive in that they focus not only on school priorities but also respond to parent needs and expertise, and consider their work life. Outreach to social services can assist district and school staff in addressing student needs for housing and other support such as healthcare.
- These strategies focus on programs available in some districts:
 - In more than one district, schools are having success notifying new and limited English speaking parents about PAT (Parents as Teachers).
 - One practitioner believes that the literacy level of the parents is crucial in getting them involved in the schools. Professional developers from one “very successful” free literacy program, Motherhead, came and taught parents how to read in English to their children.
 - PEP (Parents as Educational Partners), provides parents and grandparents of ELL students with ESOL instruction that is linked to their (grand) child’s education. The program has seven main units: The U.S. school system; School personnel and the school day; School procedures; Parent-Teacher Conferences; Report cards and curriculum; Study skills and homework; and School health procedures.

Suggested Resources:

- **Motherhead, Inc.**
<http://www.motherhead.org/>

“Motherhead is a nationally acclaimed private, non-profit organization that combines the teaching of literacy skills with child development and family empowerment issues. ... Motherhead offers classes for both adults and children. In adult classes, participants learn to be story readers, writers, and tellers in a group structure that supports their own sense of worth and ability. These classes are appropriate for all adults, regardless of reading ability or prior educational experience. By teaching the ‘why’ of reading rather than just emphasizing the ‘how,’ classes encourage parents to

be reading role models for their children. For children, Story Exploring provides a structured environment for learning reading, critical-thinking, and problem solving skills.”

- **The Parents as Educational Partners (PEP): School-Related Curriculum for Language Minority Parents**

<http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/family-pep.html>

“The PEP Curriculum addresses the need to provide limited English proficient (LEP) parents support to feel comfortable participating in their children’s education. Based on a needs assessment of parents and teachers, the Parents as Educational Partners Curriculum provides adult ESL instruction, information about the U.S. school system, and strategies for school involvement. The curriculum also assists LEP parents in overcoming the language and cultural barriers that make them particularly vulnerable to being left out of their children’s educational experiences.”

PEP is part of the Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC):

<http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/esl.html>.

- **Parents as Teachers (PAT)**

<http://www.parentsasteachers.org>

From the About Us page: “Parents as Teachers is the overarching program philosophy of providing parents with child development knowledge and parenting support. The organizational vehicle for delivering that knowledge and support is Parents as Teachers National Center.” There are several dozen PAT programs throughout Connecticut.

LEARNING AT HOME

Q 3: What information and ideas can districts provide to families about how they can help children, of all grades, at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning?

From the research:

“When schools create take home learning kits, families are not limited in helping students by their lack of supplies.”

(Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections? p.4;
<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb5-diverse.pdf>)

Additional suggestions and comments from CAPELL members’ experiences gathered during meetings, one-on-one exchanges, and received via email:

- These suggestions focus on guidance schools can give parents on creating a supportive environment to help children, of all ages, succeed with school work. According to CAPELL members, schools can encourage parents to:
 - Provide a quiet place for the child to study, and uninterrupted study time each day at home.
 - Provide materials and supplies needed to complete school assignments, e.g. scissors, tape, markers, rulers, a dictionary, a thesaurus, pens and pencils.
 - Help the child set goals for each grading period or school year and identify what they would like to accomplish during that time. Then at regular intervals, help them monitor

their own progress and make adjustments as needed letting them judge for themselves how well they are sticking to their goals.

- Develop a relationship with the child's teacher to be aware of the general assignments for the day, week or semester.
- Other suggestions focus on guidance schools can give parents on literacy activities. According to CAPELL members, schools can encourage parents to:
 - Ask schools to record class reading assignments or make tapes of stories, for bilingual homes or homes where grandparents or even parents are not comfortable reading with their children.
 - Read to students in their native language to provide a good model of literacy. This is even possible for parents who aren't literate themselves; parents can do activities such as talking about pictures in the children's books with the children.
 - Give the children a chance to read to family members.
 - Take the children to the local library and have them secure a library card.
 - Write, e.g. notes, letters, a diary, forms, etc.
- Additional strategies focus on guidance schools can give parents about activities they can do to impart parental guidance while developing children's communication skills:
 - Have "school talk" each night around the dinner table or when children get home from school, with children talking about their activities at school that day.
 - Make a display of children's schoolwork in the home. Have children explain to the family what the work is all about.
 - Discuss with children what the family watches on TV.
 - Discuss why some movies are better than others.

Suggested Resource:

- Colorin Colorado!
<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

This is a bilingual site for families and educators of English language learners, including a section created “just for parents and families to provide you with the information you need to help your child become a good reader and a successful student.” (<http://www.colorincolorado.org/families>)

COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Q 4: What are some resources and services from the community that districts can use to strengthen school programs, communications, family practices, and student learning and development? What are some strategies for working with these resources and services once they have been identified?

Strategies and resources suggested by research and other literature on parent involvement:

- **Know your community:**

- “Identify the religious, cultural, political, civic and social organizations in your community that work with minority and low-income parents and residents;
- Identify parents, community advocates and business leaders who are well respected and have credibility with culturally and linguistically diverse populations;
- Create a contact list that has the most up-to date information about leaders and organizations and what issues matter to them most;
- Meet regularly with as many community leaders and groups as possible to discuss ways you can work together; and
- Follow-through regularly with community groups on next steps: share information.”

(Family and Community Involvement: Reaching out to Diverse Communities; on the Strategy 1: Know your Community page; <http://www.se dl.org/pubs/family29/>)

- **Involve the community:**

The Florida Parental Information and Resource Center at the University of South Florida (<http://www.floridapartnership.usf.edu/>) developed a kit called “Six Sundays for School Success,” whereby community churches are called on to assist schools in communicating messages to parents and families. As part of this program, religious figures in the community allot a certain amount of the time during the homily to making announcements about the schools that their parishioners attend. The Hawaii Parent Information Resource Center has tailored this program to its own communities, the Sundays Project (<http://www.hawaiipirc.org/sundays/english>). Programs like these make another connection between the schools and the community and the messages can be delivered in the language of the parishioners.

- **Make maximum use of community resources:**

One descriptive research study found that the strategies some schools and districts use include assisting parents with English and GED instruction. These learning opportunities can also be used to incorporate guidance on the benefits of parent involvement. Depending upon the community, schools and districts can notify parents of these resources or offer them within the school or district:

- “English as a second language, GED, adult basic education, and work-readiness programs are aired on cable television. These programs help meet the needs of parents who are on waiting lists in the district’s adult education program.
- GED courses are offered in both Spanish and English. Parents in English as a second language classes are invited to take computer technology courses to be able to help them facilitate home-school learning.
- Parents who attend the English language learner classes agree to attend three to five family-involvement activities at the child’s school and report back to the center about their experiences.
- Intensive language instruction is offered to parents who are new immigrants.

- English language learner program develops a video that focuses on the importance of attendance, family involvement, and extracurricular activities for high school students. The video also provides information on alternative paths to high school graduation.”

(Parent Involvement Strategies in Urban Middle and High Schools in the Northeast and Islands Region; p. 15-16; <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=117>)

Additional suggestions and comments from CAPELL members' experiences gathered during meetings, one-on-one exchanges, and received via email:

- One way of communicating with parents who have a limited command of the English language is by establishing working relationships with community organizations that provide services to the parents' specific ethnic or language groups. Once these relationships are established, schools can potentially distribute materials through these agencies and/or have school meetings in the offices of these organizations.
- Schools and districts can also look to the YMCA, Parks and Recreation, and churches as venues for meetings.
- Libraries can act as community resource centers. They not only can provide books in multiple languages that parents can use to read to their children and that older students can access, they often also provide the space to read these books as well as host literacy classes. In addition, libraries often house videos in many languages whose aim is to teach English to adults.
- As an example of a program, the Susan B. Anthony organization brought ELL girls in one district together for six sessions in the summer to discuss self-esteem issues. The counselor who facilitated this program is now helping to develop an informal literacy program in Spanish after school during the school year. In this program, the mothers will also have a chance to interact with the girls, such as by reading together.

Suggested Resources

- **International Institute of Connecticut (IIC)**

<http://www.iiconn.org/>

The IIC “is a non-profit, non-sectarian social service agency dedicated to the needs of immigrants, refugees and their families. Support is provided through direct professional services, counseling, advocacy and the advancement of fair and humane public policy.” According to CAPELL members, IIC provides social services for any immigrant, legal or not, in terms of filling out papers, forms, translations, providing interpreters and English as a Second Language services, and more.

- **Florida Parental Information and Resource Center** at the University of South Florida

<http://www.floridapartnership.usf.edu/>

“The Florida PIRC at USF provides training and technical assistance to schools and districts on ways to effectively involve parents in their children’s education in order for all students to achieve at the highest academic level. The Florida PIRC at USF also helps schools and districts meet the requirements for parent involvement of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Title I legislation.”

- **Hawaii Parent Information Resource Center**

<http://www.hawaiiipirc.org/>

From the “About” HPIRC webpage: “HPIRC, or the Hawaii Parent Information Resource Center is a partnership of not-for-profit family centers, the Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE), and

targeted schools on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Kauai, and Molokai. We aim to enrich the education of our children by strengthening the relationship between the school and family.”

- **Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs)**

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/pirc>)

From the USDOE website: “A part of the office of Innovation and Improvement of the U.S Department of Education, PIRCs help implement successful and effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student academic achievement and that strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the education needs of children.

(Information about the activities of the **Connecticut Parent Information Resource Center** (CTPIRC) can be found at: <http://www.ctpirg.org>)

VOLUNTEERING

Q 5: How can my district recruit and organize parent help and support?

From the research:

- “Middle and high schools can enrich, extend, and support their curricular and extracurricular programs by organizing volunteers in new ways. Among many activities, middle and high schools may collect information on family members’ talents, occupations, interests, and availability to serve as volunteers. Parents, family members, and other volunteers may help to enrich students’ subject classes; improve career explorations; serve as language translators; monitor attendance and call parents of absent students... Schools may organize volunteers to serve as homeroom parents, neighborhood representatives, or sports and club contacts and establish telephone trees to help parents communicate with each other about school programs and events.” (*School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*; p. 223-224 2nd Edition; New edition available at: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/manual.htm>)
- “Generally speaking, in addition to having practices that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, developing ELL parental involvement includes supporting families, promoting communication, and advocacy for empowerment.” (*Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times*; p. 11; <http://epsl.asu.edu/epru/documents/EPSTL-0801-250-EPRU.pdf>)
- “Broaden opportunities for interacting with parents: [P.] Wrigley (2000) emphasizes the need to cultivate links between home and school by going beyond translating documents into the families’ native languages. She describes a school in rural Virginia whose principal greatly increased the participation of Hispanic parents through a series of parent meetings, conducted in Spanish, on the importance of parents’ involvement in their children’s education.” (*Preparing to serve English language learner students*; p.25; <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=151>)
- “When childcare is provided, parents don’t have to worry about students’ siblings disturbing meetings or other gatherings. When staff help to arrange carpools, those families who don’t have adequate transportation can attend meetings and activities at the school or other community locations. When families are told that it doesn’t have to be a mother or father who attends activities, then all of those involved in rearing the child [also] feel welcomed to participate.” (*Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections?*; p.4; <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb5-diverse.pdf>)

- Districts should focus on creating a welcoming environment: “...the sense of welcome families feel has a direct effect on their involvement in their children’s education... Typically, the level or value of this involvement is determined by the following factors:
 - The adults’ personal educational experience and knowledge
 - Previous levels of involvement
 - Beliefs about their children’s ability and knowledge
 - **Invitations, not just from the school, but from the child as well**” [Bold added for emphasis]

(*The School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture - A Review of Current Literature*; p.10; <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf>)

Additional suggestions and comments from CAPELL members’ experiences gathered during meetings, one-on-one exchanges, and received via email:

- Four suggestions on volunteering focus on practical ways of first making the parents feel welcomed by the school and school-oriented organizations. Schools can:
 - Work with the local PTO or PTA, especially in elementary schools, and gradually lead them into parent organizations.
 - Provide an English speaking mentor for the parent.
 - Have refreshments and make the first meeting a positive experience. Have a social “getting-to-know-you” event .
 - Organize the parents by language groups, finding an interpreter in their language, to break the ice.
- One suggestion echoes others by focusing on the meeting place:
 - The physical plant – the school building – can limit participation. Having the meetings in a smaller, less intimidating facility, such as a smaller building on the school campus or in another location such as a church, could help.
- Two additional suggestions take into consideration childcare during parent/school meetings:
 - In one Connecticut district, for the bilingual parent meeting at night, there is an aide that is hired to babysit while the parents attend the meeting.
 - When parents bring their children to school parent meetings, another district enlists bi-lingual high school age students to help an adult watch them as part of their community service activities.

Suggested Resources: Note: these resources, although geared toward parent groups in general, offer ideas schools and districts can use to encourage parent involvement in their children’s education.

- **National PTA**
<http://www.pta.org/>
 The National PTA offers a variety of programs to help parents, students, and communities. The page “Family-School Partnerships” includes links to resources to build involvement.
http://www.pta.org/family_school_partnerships.asp
- **PTO Today.com**
<http://ptoday.com/multicultural>
 PTO Today provides products, programs and services as well as hundreds of articles to the K-8 school parent groups regardless of affiliation. The multicultural section accessed by the link

above contains articles and insights on reaching out to all parents and creating an inclusive PTO. Articles such as *Multicultural Outreach: No Barriers to Involvement* and *Connect with Immigrant Parents* contain tips that schools, as well as parent groups, can use to engage parents.

DECISION MAKING

Q 6: How can my district include parents in school decisions and help to develop parent leaders and representatives? How can my district teach staff how to include parents in decision-making?

From the research:

- “Decision making activities enable families to participate in decisions about school programs that affect their own and other children. Family representatives on School Councils, school improvement teams, and various committees and in PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations ensure that parents’ voices are heard on important school decisions... However, all families need good information about school policies and opportunities to offer ideas and reactions to improve their schools.” (*School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*; p. 59 2nd Edition; New edition available at: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/manual.htm>)
- “[Districts] and schools may offer parents and teachers training in leadership, decision making, policy advocacy, and collaboration. [These] activities help to identify and provide information desired by families about school policies, course offerings, student placements and groups, special services, tests and assessments, annual test results for students, and evaluations of school programs.” (*School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*; p. 226 2nd Edition; New edition available at: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/manual.htm>)
- “Some schools offer teachers, principals, and school staff information and strategies on how to reach out to parents and work with them as partners. This can be especially beneficial to school staff who typically received little or no pre-service training in these skills... Professional development activities may include sessions on making telephone calls, home visits, and other contact strategies, students’ home culture and appreciating diversity, communication skills for parent-teacher conferences, and involving parents as leaders and decision makers in the schools.” (*Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches*; from the chapter: *Providing Information and Training to Parents and School Staff*; <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/index.html>)
- “Practice outreach rather than traditional approaches to involvement... When school staff reach out to parents and invite them into the school to participate in collaborative efforts, and assist families in supporting their hopes and dreams for their children, a stronger family involvement program can result.” (*Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections?*; p.5; <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb5-diverse.pdf>)

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Background research and literature:

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement

2002; Henderson, Anne & Mapp, Karen; SEDL (formerly Southwest Educational Development Laboratory), National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools; 234 pages.

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

From page 9: “The purpose of this publication, A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement, is to examine [a characteristic] of high-performing schools: parent and community involvement and its role in impacting on student achievement. This publication is the fourth in the series of Evidence publications authored or co-authored by Anne Henderson. It is also the second in the series of publications by SEDL’s National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.”

Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships

2006; Henderson, Anne, Mapp, Karen, Johnson, Vivian, & Davies, Don; New Press; 352 pages. (Book available for purchase at online booksellers.)

<http://www.thenewpress.com/bakesale>

“Packed with tips from principals and teachers, checklists, and an invaluable resource section, Beyond the Bake Sale reveals how to build strong collaborative relationships and offers practical advice for improving interactions between parents and teachers, from insuring that PTA groups are constructive and inclusive to navigating the complex issues surrounding diversity in the classroom.”

Building Support for Better Schools: Seven Steps to Engaging Hard-to-Reach Communities

2000; SEDL (formerly Southwest Educational Development Laboratory), National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools; 36 pages.

<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam27.html>

“This practical guide is designed for educators, civic leaders, community organizers or anyone else interested in involving traditionally hard-to-reach communities. It offers advice on getting to know your community, identifying issues important to the community, and designating and training facilitators. This publication is also available in Spanish.”

CAPELL Guidelines for ELL Program Design

In process

The Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners is creating The CAPELL Guidelines for ELL Program Design to serve a variety of purposes:

1. to help districts with ELLs align their program goals with those of other successful programs in Connecticut
2. to assist school or district administrators in developing, improving, or gauging the quality of their ELL programs
3. to serve as a blueprint for Boards of Education to put their districts in compliance with state and federal mandates regarding the education of language minority students, also known as English Language Learners (ELLs)
4. to provide access to information and resources regarding the education of ELLs

Diversity: School, Family and Community Connections

2003; Boethel, Martha, Averett, Amy (contributor), Buttram, Joan (contributor), Donnelly, Deborah (contributor), Jordan, Catherine (contributor), Myers, Margaret (contributor), Orozco, Evangelina (contributor), Wood, Lacy (contributor); SEDL (formerly Southwest Educational Development Laboratory), National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools; 93 pages
<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam35.html>

From the SEDL abstract: “this is SEDL's third research synthesis in a series focusing on family and community connections with schools. This synthesis focuses specifically on three categories: race or ethnicity, culture (including language), and socioeconomic status. The report also explores barriers to involvement for minority and low-income families, strategies that have been used to address those barriers, and recommendations that local educational leaders can adapt to address their specific needs. It is based on a review of over 64 studies.”

Engaging Latino Families for Student Success: How Parent Education Can Reshape Parents' Sense of Place in the Education of Their Children

2001; Chrispeels, Janet & Rivero, Elvia; *Peabody Journal of Education*, 1532-7930, 76(2); Pages 119 – 169

Available for purchase from Routledge:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a785830383&db=all>

ERIC abstract: This study “Investigated how Latino parents defined their roles in their children's education and their relationships with schools, examining how they perceived their sense of place before and after attending the Parent Institute for Quality Education. Survey, interview, and observation data indicated that after attending the Institute, parents had expanded concepts of involvement in their children's education at home and at school.” <http://eric.ed.gov> (ERIC ID# EJ654790)

English Language Learner Resource Guide: A Guide for Rural Districts with a Low Incidence of ELLs

2004; Hill, Jane Donnelly & Flynn, Kathleen; *Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)*; 29 pages.

<http://www.mcrel.org/topics/products/203/>

From the McREL abstract: “This guide is designed help rural school districts with a low incidence of ELLs to develop the capacity to build and implement a comprehensive program that meets both the academic and language proficiency needs of ELLs.” It has three sections: Building Leadership Capacity, Building Instructional Staff Capacity, and Building Capacity for Parent and Family Involvement.

English Language Learners at School: A Guide for Administrators: “Over Fifty Experts Answer Your Questions”

2006; Hamayan, Else & Freeman, Rebecca; *Caslon Publishing and Consulting for Language Educators*; 259 pages. (Book available for purchase at online booksellers)

<http://caslonpublishing.com/publication/english-language-learners-school/>

From the Caslon abstract: “Accountability for English language learners (ELLs) is a critical issue for schools today. The number of identified ELLs in public schools (K-12) grew 95% over the last decade, with more than 5 million school age ELLs identified. Administrators are demanding information about how they can ensure that the ELLs in their schools achieve. English Language Learners at School is a practical guide for administrators who must address this challenge now!”

Examining American Indian Perspectives in the Central Region on Parent Involvement in Children's Education

2008; Mackety, Dawn & Linder-VanBerschot, Jennifer; (*Issues & Answers Report, REL 2008–No. 059*)
U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation

and Regional Assistance; 43 pages.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=159>

Although this report is on American Indian parents, it is included in this guide because many of the issues described here are similar to those schools face with ELLs. From the report's Summary: "This study examines American Indian parents' perceptions of parent involvement in their children's education and factors that may encourage or discourage involvement. ... To begin to address the regional need to close the achievement gap for American Indian students and specifically to effectively engage American Indian parents in their children's education, parent perceptions about involvement are needed. ... The purposes of the study were to examine how Central Region American Indian parents perceived parent involvement and to understand what encourages or discourages their involvement." (p. i-ii)

Family and Community Involvement: Reaching Out to Diverse Populations

2000; SEDL (Formerly Southwest Educational Development Laboratory), National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools; 26 pages.

<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/fam29.html>

From the SEDL Abstract: This publication "is geared toward teachers, principals, and superintendents who want to develop meaningful parent and community involvement [for] culturally and linguistically diverse community members. It provides tips on how to communicate effectively with parents and how to make parents comfortable in your school."

Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches (An Idea Book)

1997; Funkhouser, Janie & Gonzales, Miriam; U.S. Department of Education, Partnership for Family Involvement in Education.

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/index.html>

From the Executive Summary: "This Idea Book is intended to assist educators, parents, and policy makers as they develop and nurture school-family partnerships. [It] identifies and describes successful strategies used by 20 local Title I programs that have overcome barriers to parent involvement These district and school programs enhance parent-school communications and help parents support their children's academic work at school and at home. Some of the programs involve parents in school planning and governance activities and as volunteers. ... Telephone interviews with staff and parents at these programs as well as focus group interviews with parents provided the detailed illustrations of specific strategies for overcoming barriers to parent involvement..."

La Ley Para No Dejar Atras a Ningun Nino: Lo que Implica Para Los Padres

2003; Henderson, Anne; Parent Leadership Associates; 42 pages.

<http://ctpirc.org/pdf/NCLBWhatsinitforParentsSpanishversion.pdf>

This guide, in Spanish, looks at what NCLB requires of schools and districts to involve parents in the work of school improvement and suggests leverage points that families can use to ensure a quality education for all children.

No Child Left Behind: What's in it for Parents

2002; Henderson, Anne; Parent Leadership Associates; 30 pages.

http://ctpirc.org/s/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53:nclb-whats-in-it-for-parents&catid=31:nclb&Itemid=134

This guide, in English, looks at what NCLB requires of schools and districts to involve parents in the work of school improvement and suggests leverage points that families can use to ensure a quality education for all children.

Parent Involvement Strategies in Urban Middle and High Schools in the Northeast and Islands Region

2009; Agronick, G., Clark, A., O'Donnell, L., Inc., Stueve, A.; (*Issues and Answers Report, REL 2009–No. 069*); U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands; 59 pages.
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=117>

From the Summary, page i: “The study reviewed the literature on parent involvement practices and programs to inform development of a protocol for collecting and organizing data on practices and programs. The review included studies that met screening criteria for the timeframe (1997–2008), intervention strategy (parent involvement policies, practices, and programs), sample . . . , and outcome. Practices and programs encompassed efforts to encourage parent involvement with students at home and school. Relevant outcomes included parent involvement, with or without linkages to student outcomes.”

Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A: Non-Regulatory Guidance

2004; U.S. Department of Education; 55 pages.
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc>

From Page 2: “This guidance is divided into five major sections. The first deals with general issues related to parental involvement, the second addresses the parental involvement responsibilities of State educational agencies (SEAs), the third describes responsibilities of local educational agencies (LEAs), the fourth describes the responsibilities of schools, and the fifth describes the responsibilities of LEAs and schools to build parents’ capacity for becoming involved in improving their child’s academic achievement. Included in the appendices are relevant definitions (Appendix A), key Title I, Part A parental notice requirements (Appendix B), a list of research-based resources for improving teaching and learning (Appendix C), a sample template that might be used for the development of a district-wide parental involvement policy (Appendix D), and a sample template for a school-parent compact (Appendix E).”

Position Statement on School-Family-Community Partnerships for Student Success

Adopted November 4, 2009; Connecticut State Board of Education; 3 pages.
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/board/SFCP.pdf>

Policy Guidance for Position Statement on School-Family-Community Partnerships for Student Success

November 2009; Connecticut State Board of Education; 4 pages.
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/board/SFCPPolicyGuidance.pdf>

The State Board of Education’s positions on school, family, and community partnerships, as adopted November 4, 2009, and additional guidance to the position statement.

Preparing to Serve English Language Learner Students with Emerging English

2008; Zehler, A., Adger, C., Coburn, C., Arteagoitia, I., Williams, K., Jacobson, L.; (*Issues & Answers Report, REL 2008–No. 049*); U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia; 32 pages.
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=151>

“This report aims to help school districts deal with the challenges of newly enrolling or rapidly increasing numbers of English language learner students by offering background information and sharing the experiences of districts that have addressed similar challenges in providing services and infrastructure to support the success of English language learner students.”

Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times

2008, Arias, M. Beatriz & Morillo-Campbell, Milagros; *The Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice*, Arizona State University; 22 pages.

<http://epsl.asu.edu/epru/documents/EPSL-0801-250-EPRU.pdf>

From the Executive Summary, page 1: “This policy brief analyzes factors related to the implementation of effective parental involvement with English Language Learners (ELLs). . . . This brief analyzes characteristics of the ELL student and parent population; barriers to ELL family engagement with schools; and characteristics of traditional and non-traditional parental involvement models.”

Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections?

2005; Ferguson, Chris; *A Strategy Brief of the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools; SEDL (Formerly Southwest Educational Development Laboratory), National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools*; 12 pages.

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/rb/rb5-diverse.pdf>

This Brief draws upon the research and syntheses of SEDS as well as other research to provide educators with a quick reference and resources for reaching out to diverse learners.

School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action

2009; Epstein, Joyce, Sanders, Mavis, Sheldon, Steven, Simon, Beth, Clark Salinas, Karen, Rodriguez Jansorn, Natalie, Van Voorhis, Frances, Martin, Cecelia, Thomas, Brenda, Greenfeld, Marsha, Hutchins, Darcy, Williams, Kenyatta; *National Network of Partnership Schools; Corwin Press*; 376 pages.

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/handbook-for-action.htm>

“When schools, families, and communities collaborate and share responsibility for students’ education, they can make a positive impact on student achievement. Based on 25 years of research, this updated edition of a bestseller details a framework that enables school, district, and state leaders to develop more effective programs for family and community involvement. Educational leaders also learn how teams can mobilize community resources, resolve challenges to reach all families, evaluate program results, and continue to improve plans and practices over time.”

More information from <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/manual.htm>: “The Third Edition includes research summaries and useful tools for developing and evaluating programs of family and community involvement. A CD comes with the Third Edition. It provides a PowerPoint presentation to conduct the NNPS [National Network of Partnership Schools] One-Day Team Training Workshop, copies of workshop handouts, activities, planning and evaluation forms, and selected Spanish translations of workshop materials. . . . It is designed to guide the work of Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) consisting of teachers, parents, administrators, and others. . . . Ten chapters offer step-by-step strategies to improve leadership and programs of school, family, and community connections.”

On NNPS: “Established at Johns Hopkins University in 1996, NNPS invites schools, districts, states, and organizations to join together and use research-based approaches to organize and sustain excellent programs of family and community involvement that will increase student success in school.” (<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/index.htm>)

School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture, a Review of Current Literature (The)

2008; Prepared by Ferguson, Chris, with contributions from Ramos, Manica, Rudo, Zena and Wood, Lacy; *National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools at SEDL*; 102 pages.

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/research-syntheses.html>

This review of family involvement literature “surveys thirty research reports and meta-analyses published between 2005 and 2008. These studies explore a wide range of family involvement

programs, challenges, needs, strategies, and contexts... The document contains 1) an overview of new literature, 2) a matrix of the trends across the studies, 3) an explanation of the types of research studies included in the review, and 4) detailed descriptions of each of the included reports. ”

Supporting Parent, Family and Community Involvement in Your School.

2000; Davis, Debra; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement under contract # RJ96006501, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; 39 pages.

http://www.pacer.org/mpc/pdf/titlepip/SupportingInvolvement_article.pdf

“This guide provides ideas and suggestions taken from research on family and community involvement in schools and can help school staff and others design a long-term approach to garnering the positive involvement of all concerned.”

RESOURCES

Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC)

<http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/>

“For over 35 years the Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC) has provided...professional development for adult and family educators. Whether providing training for instructional or program development, the ALRC utilizes content expertise and current research to deliver high quality services to individuals, programs, and state networks. Services are practitioner-based and user-friendly, responding to the current and changing needs of the field of adult education.” Services include Parents as Educational Partners (PEP), described below.

Center for Innovation & Improvement - Families and Schools

<http://www.families-schools.org/>

This site contains resources for parents, schools, community, with information on a 3-phase program and links to other resources.

Connecticut Parent Information Resource Center

<http://www.ctpirc.org>

From About CT PIRC: “The work of the Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC) is guided by the overarching principle that all families have strengths and all families play a critical role in their children’s educational success. The project works through faith-based and community organizations. It is school-based and school-linked. It makes explicit connections between statewide dissemination and outreach activities, professional development events, and direct work with selected high priority schools... The CT PIRC is coordinated by the Connecticut State Education Resource Center (SERC), a nonprofit agency... Together with its primary partners, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and Connecticut Parents as Teachers (ConnPAT), CT PIRC builds on a history of well-documented success, evidenced by national recognition from the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) as a Partnership State Award winner in 2000 and 2005, and on the statewide leadership and infrastructure in school-family-community partnerships developed under the two previous PIRC grants and SERC/CSDE collaborative programs.”

(Connecticut State Education Resource Center (SERC): <http://ctserc.org>)

Colorin Colorado!

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

This bilingual site is for families and educators of English language learners. It has a bilingual section created just for parents and families to provide them with the information needed to help their children become good readers and successful students

Florida Parental Information and Resource Center at the University of South Florida

<http://www.floridapartnership.usf.edu/>

“The Florida PIRC at USF provides training and technical assistance to schools and districts on ways to effectively involve parents in their children’s education in order for all students to achieve at the highest academic level. The Florida PIRC at USF also helps schools and districts meet the requirements for parent involvement of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Title I legislation.”

International Institute of Connecticut

<http://www.iiconn.org/>

Social services for any immigrant, legal or not, in terms of filling out papers, forms, translations, lots of resources. Provides interpreters and English as a Second Language services.

Motheread, Inc.

<http://www.motheread.org/>

Motheread, Inc. is a “private, non-profit organization that combines the teaching of literacy skills with child development and family empowerment issues. Parents and children learn to use the power of language to discover more about themselves, their families, and their communities... In adult classes, participants learn to be story readers, writers, and tellers in a group structure that supports their own sense of worth and ability. ... For children, Story Exploring provides a structured environment for learning reading, critical-thinking, and problem solving skills.”

National PTA

<http://www.pta.org/>

The National PTA offers a variety of programs to help parents, students, and communities. The page “Family-School Partnerships” includes links to resources to build involvement.

(http://www.pta.org/family_school_partnerships.asp)

National PTA documents include:

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

1997; National PTA, Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service

http://www.ptasonline.org/kspta/national_standards.pdf

From the Standards introduction: “The National PTA’s National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs and their quality indicators are research-based and grounded in both sound philosophy and practical experience. The purpose for the standards is threefold:

1. To promote meaningful parent and family participation;
2. To raise awareness regarding the components of effective programs;
3. To provide guidelines for schools that wish to improve their programs.”

Parents As Educational Partners

<http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/family-pep.html>

“The Parents as Educational Partners (PEP): School-Related Curriculum for Language Minority Parents fills this gap. The PEP Curriculum addresses the need to provide limited English proficient (LEP) parents support to feel comfortable participating in their children’s education. Based on a needs assessment of parents and teachers, the Parents as Educational Partners

Curriculum provides adult ESL instruction, information about the U.S. school system, and strategies for school involvement. The curriculum also assists LEP parents in overcoming the language and cultural barriers that make them particularly vulnerable to being left out of their children's educational experiences."

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

<http://www.parentsasteachers.org>

From About Us: "Parents as Teachers is the overarching program philosophy of providing parents with child development knowledge and parenting support. The organizational vehicle for delivering that knowledge and support is Parents as Teachers National Center. The National Center drives that philosophy, or mission, through four program areas: Born to Learn, Professional Development, Meld and Advocacy. All of these program areas work through a strong network of state leaders and partners."

Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs)

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/pirc>

From the USDOE website: "A part of the office of Innovation and Improvement of the U.S Department of Education, PIRC's help implement successful and effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student academic achievement and that strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the education needs of children.

PTO Today.com

<http://ptotoday.com>

PTO Today provides products, programs and services as well as hundreds of articles to the K-8 school parent groups regardless of affiliation. This multicultural section contains articles and insights on reaching out to all parents and creating an inclusive PTO. However, articles such as Multicultural Outreach: No Barriers to Involvement and Connect with Immigrant Parents contain tips that schools as well as parent groups could use to engage parents.

Taking a Closer Look: A Guide to Online Resources on Family Involvement

2005; Weiss, Heather, Faughnan, Kelly, Caspe, Margaret, Wolos, Cassandra, Lopez, M. Elena, Kreider, Holly ; Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP), Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE); 47 pages

<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/taking-a-closer-look-a-guide-to-online-resources-on-family-involvement>

From the Harvard Family Research Project abstract: "This comprehensive resource guide compiles a wealth of information about family involvement from over 100 national organizations. It contains Web links to recent (published in and after 2000) research, information, and tools. Compiled in 2004–2005 the guide contains resources about family involvement in early childhood education, elementary, middle school, and high school. It includes family involvement in several contexts: including home, school, and out-of-school time programs."

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): A United States federal statute enacted April 11, 1965. The Act is an extensive statute which funds primary and secondary education, while explicitly forbidding the establishment of a national curriculum. As mandated in the Act, the funds are authorized for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and parental involvement promotion. The Act was originally authorized through 1970; however the government has reauthorized the Act every five years since its enactment. (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>)

English Language Learners (ELL): National-origin-minority students who are limited-English proficient (US Department of Education). Students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English. (<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/>) The term English language learner (ELL) has generally replaced the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) used by the federal government to identify those students who have insufficient English to succeed in English-only classrooms.

English as a Second Language (ESL); English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): An educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content) and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in mainstream classrooms, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program. Every bilingual education program has an ESL component. (<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/>)