



NCPIE Update

A Publication of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

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THE PARENT/TEACHER HOME VISIT PROJECT

The October 31st NCPIE meeting showcased The Parent/Teacher Home Visit Program from Sacramento, California. Carrie Rose, Executive Director, plus five of her colleagues (both parents and teachers) came to talk about the tremendous success this program has had in creating partnerships between families and schools, and improving student achievement and social success.

This Project (PTHVP), based on a partnership between a faith based community organizing group, a local teachers union and a school district, began in 1998 as an effort to address the cycle of blame that existed between parents and site personnel at several Sacramento schools where there was a pervasive history of low student achievement, high levels of poverty, and where high percentages of children entered school as English learners.

PROFESSIONAL relationships developed between families and teachers.

Each co-educator is respected for expertise regarding knowledge of student and curriculum.

TRUST established between community and schools.

Home visits help end the common cycle of blame at schools with history of low student achievement.

HOPE rekindled for student and school site success.

Parents, teachers and students share hopes, expectations and plans for academic success.

VISITS provide opportunity for teachers to step into the community.

Perceptions are altered and cultural competency is increased in our diverse school communities.

PARTICIPATION in visits is voluntary for everyone and teachers are paid for time.

Visits are designed to open lines of communication, not for assessments or interventions.

Many organizations offer “home visits” but those are usually based on a model where an assessment is being made or a problematic behavior is being addressed. This is true whether school systems use home visits to address truancy problems or a social service agency is using home visits to address concerns and need for services. This strategy only heightens mistrust – the very issue PTHVP is trying to address.

It is different from those home visits because this project and training is based on a community organizing model and principals of parent empowerment, **endorsed by the state and local teachers union, our local interfaith organizing group, and championed by school district leaders who are willing to do business a little differently for the sake of student success.** Home visits are not “drop ins”, but rather an appointment set between two willing colleagues in a setting where teachers do not have the power/institutional advantage.

Project Members Believe:

1. Parents and teachers are equally important co-educators given that the parent is the expert on the individual child while the teacher is the expert on the curriculum that must be mastered for success.
2. Before important information about academic status can be effectively shared, positive communication must be established and barriers addressed.
3. All students and families should be visited because targeting challenging students will only perpetuate the cycles of mistrust.
4. All parents have the ability to assist their child in their academic success and that effective parent involvement can happen in every home—especially in light of the educational research about rethinking effective exactly what is effective parent involvement.
5. This project should be voluntary for all involved and that teachers should be compensated for their time.

Key Findings for Home Visits:

From the beginning of this project, teacher participation has been voluntary and compensated. **The relationships formed between participants are mutually respectful, empowering, ongoing, and insure accountability.** The results speak for themselves. Teachers and parents report positive changes in their students' academic experience. **In short, homework is getting done, behavioral problems are down, and test scores are up!** The positive results at the school sites have strengthened the bond between partners and the determination to work together to make sure that our children succeed

This is an inexpensive and easily replicated model of parent engagement that has been proven to end the cycle of blame between parents and school staff by building trust and respect, instilling cultural competency and increasing personal and professional capacity for all involved.

The increased communication, trust and support between parents and teachers via home visits result in:

- Increased student attendance rates.
- Increased student test scores.
- Decreased suspension and expulsion rates.
- Decreased vandalism at school site.

Home visits also provide a positive opportunity to meet federal and state mandates that parents be meaningfully informed of their child's academic standing.

For a more in-depth understanding as to how this model works, go to their website: www.pthvp.org. (Go to the section for *Contact Info* and view their video) They also offer training, consultation and resources. To date, the Project has been invited to provide trainings and launch projects in 10 states. If you are interested in learning more about the services described call **(916) 448-5290**.