


Process Two (of 6)

A step-by-step guide for **SHARING THE SCHOOL'S ON-GOING STORY**

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

Sharing The On-going Story is part of an overall approach to organizing family involvement.

1 Identify a group of “key communicators” to serve as your Family Involvement Steering Committee.

Try to recruit parents who represent the different neighborhoods, ethnic/racial groups and grade levels in your school. See INSERT for STORY Step 1.

2 Assess your current practice for “family friendliness.”

Ask the Steering Committee to use the checklist in INSERT for STORY Step 2 for self-reflection.

3 Survey your family community to determine what they need in order to actively participate in your Family Group.

INSERT for STORY Step 3 suggests a survey you could use.

4 Plan for parental involvement.

Use INSERT for STORY Step 4 to develop one event that is relevant and inviting, based on survey results, direct contacts and steering committee judgment.

5 Publish a school newsletter regularly, with volunteer help typing, editing, copying, collating and distributing it.

INSERT A for STORY Step 5 offers tips for making the newsletter lively and effective. INSERT B for STORY Step 5 is a sample newsletter.

6 Develop and publish a brochure and classroom newsletters to advertise the many good points about your school.

INSERT A for STORY Step 6 is a process for developing good newsletters. INSERT B encourages bragging. INSERT C is a sample brochure.

7 Emphasize first-hand communication.

This is the heart of the principal's job. (S)he must be visible and accessible at arrival and dismissal times. Say hello, get to know parents, LISTEN. Even if you can't make time for an immediate concern, show you care and take comments and concerns seriously.

8 Return calls as soon as possible. Establish a practice that the sun doesn't set on an unaddressed family concern.

You may be able to do no more than tell them you cannot get to their concern immediately, but let them know when to expect your response.

9 Become systematic about making positive phone calls. Develop incentives for teachers who make positive contacts with parents.

Practice noting and calling when you observe polite behavior, good academic work or improvement in any area. Keep records, as a staff, and give public recognition (or a gift certificate to a local teachers' supply store) to those who build this habit.

10 Develop a data-collection system and post a graph each month of the positive written or phone contacts that staff has initiated.

INSERTS A and B for STORY Step 10 are data-collection forms.

11 Develop a brochure that coaches families on how and when to communicate concerns to the school.

INSERT for STORY Step 11 is a sample brochure.

