

# WHY PARENTS MATTER FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND STUDENT FLOURISHING

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Their role should be valued and upheld by schools and other outside community organizations (clubs, religious organizations, etc) to ensure academic success and overall student flourishing. Schools and parents have long enjoyed a working partnership centered on the students, but we have recently seen growing strain and animosity between the two. An African proverb says, "When the elephants fight, the grass loses." Students are "losing" on multiple measures, including academic achievement, safety in schools, and physical and mental health concerns.

**According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#),**

**"When parents are engaged in their children's school activities, their children get better grades, choose healthier behaviors, and have better social skills. Parent engagement also makes it more likely that children and adolescents will avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as sexual risk behaviors and tobacco, alcohol and other drug use." Parent engagement in schools is defined as "parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents."**

**According to the [Search Institute](#), "Family Support- Family life provides high levels of love and support" shows the highest correlation among "external developmental assets" that help young people grow up "healthy, caring, and responsible." ("Caring School Climate" and "School Boundaries" are also listed).**

**According to the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), "For decades, researchers have pointed to one key success factor that transcends nearly all others, such as socioeconomic status, student background or the kind of school a student attends: **parent involvement**." Also, "children whose families are engaged in their education are more likely to:**

- Earn higher grades and score higher on tests;
- Graduate from high school and college;
- Develop self-confidence and motivation in the classroom;
- Have better social skills and classroom behavior."

**The [National PTA](#) updated its National Standards for Family-School Partnerships in 2022. The six standards include:**

- 1. Welcome all families-** The school treats families as valued partners in their child's education and facilitates a sense of belonging in the school community.
- 2. Communicate effectively-** The school supports staff to engage in proactive, timely, two-way communication so that all families can easily understand and contribute to their child's educational experience.
- 3. Support student success-** The school builds the capacity of families and educators to continuously collaborate to support students' academic, social and emotional learning.
- 4. Speak up for every child-** The school affirms family and student expertise and advocacy so that all students are treated fairly and have access to relationships and opportunities that will support their success.
- 5. Share power-** The school partners with families in decisions that affect children and families and together- and as a team, inform, influence and create policies, practices, and programs.

## To improve academic success and overall student flourishing:

1. Parents should be welcomed and encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their children's education.
2. Parents should be granted easy access to **all curriculum and supporting instructional materials** their children are scheduled to receive and be given the right to opt their child out for any religious or personal conviction reasons. (All instruction related to human sexuality, child abuse, family violence, dating violence or sex trafficking should be opt-in and require written parent permission for participation.)
3. Parents should be given access to **all school academic, discipline, physical or mental health records** of their children.
4. Parents should be notified of any change related to **the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being** and have full participation in determining any needed services.
5. Parents should receive notice of, be given access to, and required to provide permission for **any well-being questionnaire or health screening form**.
6. Parents should be provided a clear and responsive policy for **submitting complaints or filing grievances** to the school district and/or school board, and for **filing appeals with a higher governing agency**.
7. Schools should be prohibited from implementing any policies or procedures that contradict the above.