



## COMPACT TOOL # 8:

### ALIGN RESOURCES WITH THE COMPACT

Your Compact is like a blueprint. It's a plan for building a partnership between parents and teachers to improve student achievement. To actually construct that partnership will require some resources! Focusing your school and community resources on engaging families with specific learning goals in mind is what we mean by alignment.

Here is a short checklist of resources you can tap:

**Funding:** You may need cash to pay for things like food/refreshments, transportation, supplies for home learning kits, school supplies, paper, copying, and books.

- **The Title I budget:** The law actually says that every school that gets at least \$500,000 in Title I funds must use A MINIMUM of one percent of those funds for family involvement. How is your school's one percent minimum being used now?
- **The school budget:** Your school budget probably has line items for printing, copying, supplies, books, instructional materials, and so on.
- **Grant budgets:** Many schools have grants for special projects or are involved in district grant programs, like the SIG program, Community Schools, and Early Childhood Transitions. Many have a family involvement component. For example, GEAR-UP, a federal program that supports early college awareness and readiness, requires that families receive information about preparing their children for college. You could tap GEAR UP funds to support a college awareness night, with a focus on skills students need to be ready for college prep classes in middle and high school, so that they will be fully prepared upon graduating from high school to enter college or technical school. To find out what grants your school has, check with the principal.

**Professional Development:** Teachers may want some training about designing family learning activities or workshops focused on strengthening specific skills.

- **District professional development program:** Focus on one or two specific offerings that will address your specific concerns. Other possibilities are to use Title I funds for data team specialists to work with teachers or for providing workshops for parents and families around the goals of the school.
- **CT PIRC:** The state's Parent Involvement Resource Center (PIRC) offers professional development, technical assistance and other support for school-family-community partnerships, with a focus on Title I schools. Contact information: Call toll-free: 1-888-842-8678; Website: <http://www.ctpirc.org>
- **School budget:** In some districts, schools have a PD line item in their budgets. Check to see what's available. The Title I budget might be a source for follow up training and technical assistance to the professional development offered by the district.
- **Reading and Math coaches:** Subject-area experts right in your school may be able to help teachers develop interesting workshops and home learning activities.
- **Local college/university:** The Education School may offer technical assistance and/or have students looking for practical school and classroom experience.



**Community Partners:** Your community is full of people and groups who can help.

- **Local community groups**, including faith-based organizations like churches, synagogues and mosques, can offer space for meeting, communications tools like bulletins and announcements that can get the word out about activities and events at school, and volunteers who can make calls or set up for activities.
- **Local businesses** can offer food, supplies, coupons, prizes, and services.
- **The school volunteer program** may have a list of parents, family members, and local residents who've signed up to help. They can make calls, organize a community walk, set up a buddy system, provide childcare, or organize a potluck supper.
- **Community service organizations and agencies** offer students and families academic enrichment and support, such as tutoring, mentoring, childcare, recreation, and after-school programs. Use the compact to start a conversation on how their programs could support school achievement goals.

**School Communications:** Consider the ways the school communicates with families and the community.

- **School Website:** Post the compact on the Website and make sure learning activities and events are posted on the home page.
- **Newsletter:** Carry tips from workshops and learning events in the newsletter, such as simple math games for families, five words of the week or examples of text-to-self connections that students have made.
- **Phone message system:** Alert families to upcoming learning events, send home a learning tip of the week, remind parents to bring the compact to parent-teacher conferences.

**Parent Education:** Check out local offerings of classes for parents. Which ones could support the goals of your compact or be tweaked to offer content that aligns with your goals?

- **Your school's parent education program:** What workshops, shows, events and classes does the school currently offer? An annual school play? A music program? Class meetings? How could they be linked to the goals of your compact?
- **The district's parent university or other education program:** Do some of these classes support the goals of your compact? Is there a family literacy program? Family resource centers? Saturday academies? Summer learning programs?

**Title I evaluation:** It's important that your compact and all the activities it generates are included when the program is being evaluated.

- **Skill development:** Did the compact's focus on grade level skills make a difference? If the compact is focused on literacy skills, did those skills improve at a faster rate? Did teachers notice if students' comprehension and vocabulary improved? Did parents report doing more at home to support reading, writing and discussion?
- **Achievement gaps:** Evaluate the impact the compact may have on different groups of students. Did families of struggling students attend workshops and use what they learned?
- **Quality of workshops:** How did parents rate the workshops, home learning activities, and other information offered?
- **Improved parent-teacher communications:** Do parents and teachers say they communicate better and more often? Do they think it's making a difference?