

Family Engagement in Secondary Schools: Building Trusting Relationships and Supporting Families to Play Age-Appropriate Roles

Do Now:

- Meet the other participants at your table.
- Access the materials for today's session via the conference app.



FLAMBOYANT
FOUNDATION

Flamboyant Foundation

Who We Are: Flamboyant Foundation is a private, family foundation focused on improving educational outcomes for children in Pre-K-12 public schools in Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

What We Do: Bring strategic leadership and investment of time and money to address some of the most deeply rooted educational challenges

D.C. Focus Areas: Family engagement

Family engagement strategies informed by:

- Focus groups with 150+ D.C. parents
- Landscape analysis
- National research
- Expert interviews
- Teacher fellowships and school learning partnerships
- Evaluation by JHU researchers linking work with student success



@FlamboyantDC

Agenda

- Who is Flamboyant (5 min)
|
- **What We Learned (30 min)**
|
- Learning in Action (25 min)
 - Middle School Partnerships
 - College Readiness and Success Partnerships
|
- Reflection and Discussion (15 min)

Objectives

- Describe who Flamboyant Foundation is and our research-informed approach to family engagement in secondary schools.
- Describe how the learning is translated to in-school application as we work with middle schools and high schools in the District of Columbia.
- Discuss key learnings and recommendations for action and reflect on implications for school leaders and educators' engagement of families.

Family Engagement Linked to Student Outcomes



12 D.C. public elementary schools
4,000 students



It found that
students whose families received a home visit,
one of the core strategies
in the Family Engagement Partnership,



and were more likely to read at or above grade level,

compared to similar students who did not receive a home visit.



What We Heard from Families

“I always get a feeling like ‘oh-what-are-you-doing’ type of feel. The teachers who know you... that you’re not there to scrutinize or criticize, it’s different. But everybody else, the principal, everybody, I just felt kind of like, you know, they can’t wait for me to go home or at least leave the building.”

“Like nobody has ever called me positive or basically said, ‘Hey, I’m [child’s name]’s teacher. I’d like to extend this time to meet you. Or you could come by?’ That hasn’t really happened. It’s more hurtful. If something bad happens, like my daughter has an attitude, they’ll call me, but anything else, I get nothing.”

“In elementary school, you drop your students off and see teachers more often, and it’s easier to communicate and have that one-on-one time. In high school or middle school, it’s totally different because the children are a little more independent. They’re on their own, and you don’t see the teachers as often which means that’s less communication.”

What about Secondary Schools?

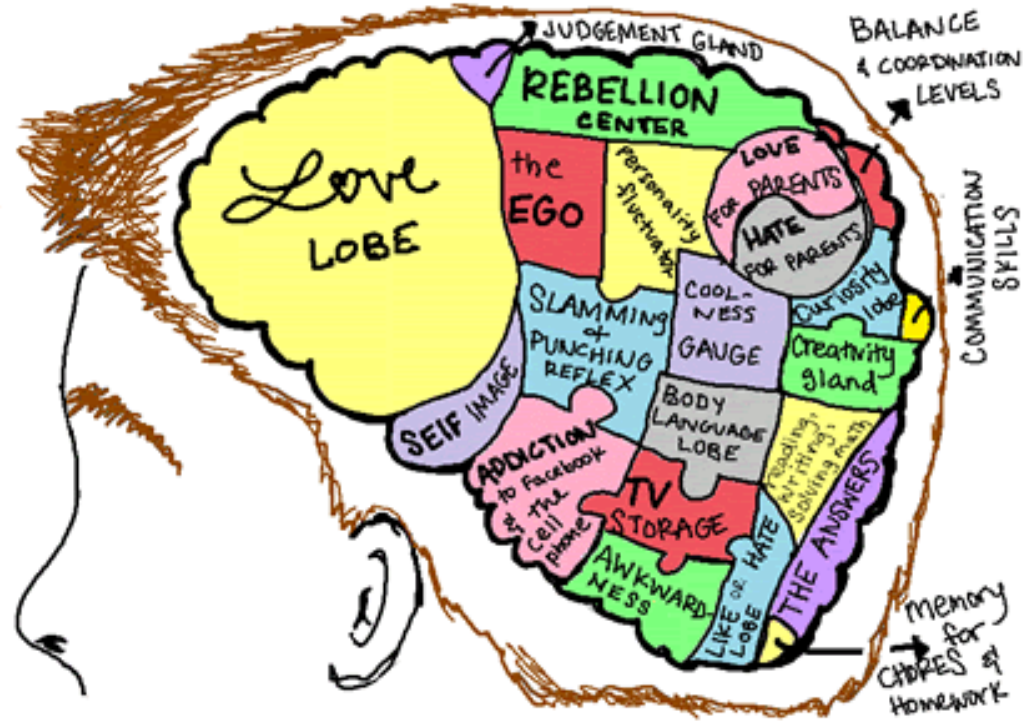
Research confirms that parent engagement in middle and high school positively impacts students' academic achievement, school attendance, high school graduation, and college matriculation.

Adolescent Development =
Change in Parental Roles

School Structure Changes

Adolescent Development = Change in Parental Roles

THE AVERAGE TEENAGE BRAIN



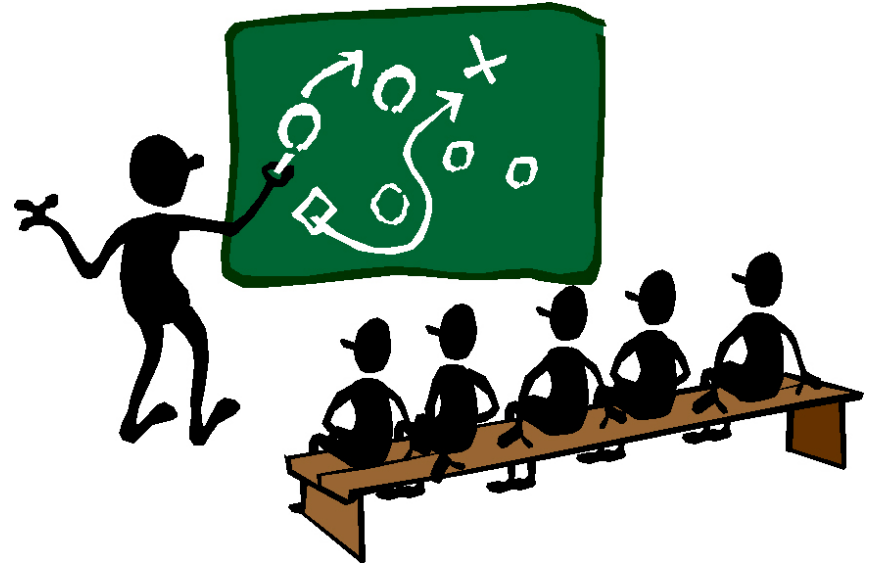
Five Roles that Accelerate Learning



Adolescent Development = Change in Parental Roles

Elementary: Parent as Teacher

Secondary: Parent as Coach



Secondary School Structure to Facilitate Family Engagement

Advisory



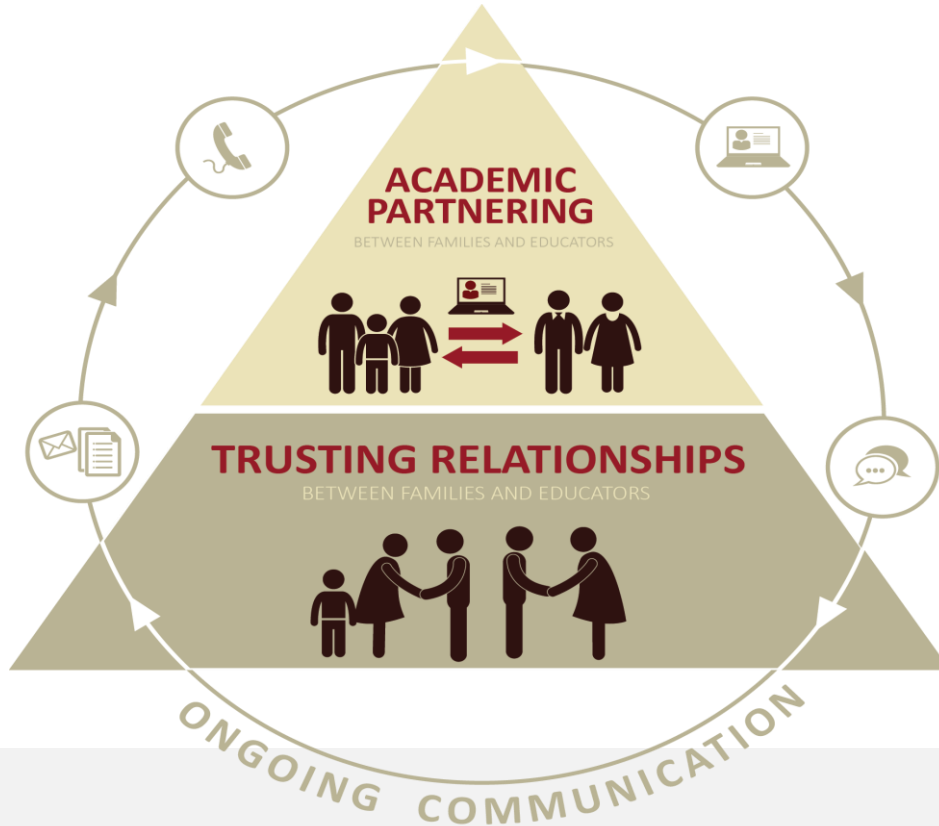
Grade Level Meetings



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Middle School Family Engagement Partnership



Relationship Building in Secondary Schools



- Student attends the home visit and may even generate the questions
- Advisory teachers conduct and lead visits for students on their advisory roster. They visit with another teacher from the grade level team.
- Advisory teachers share key learnings from the home visit with the grade level.

Academic Partnerships in Secondary Schools



Academic Partnerships in Secondary Schools



- Involve the student
- Share manageable amounts of data with families
- Co-create goals and ask each teacher, student, and family to identify how they can support the student to reach the goals
- Follow up and update families on their child's progress

Ongoing Communication in Secondary Schools

Teachers: It's hard to communicate frequently when you have so many students and so many behavioral and academic concerns to share.

"I teach 100 students. I'm barely keeping up with mandatory calls- calls about discipline problems or school uniform or absences. I don't have time to make the calls about the stuff that really matters."

Families: We don't receive consistent information which makes supporting at home challenging.

"You don't see the teachers as often which means that's less communication with the teachers. It's a little difficult especially because at this moment my daughter's not doing good in her AP English class, and I haven't heard from her teacher. I reached out to her, but I haven't heard back from her yet."

Ongoing Communication in Secondary Schools

Advisory Teacher

- Build relationships with families
- Is the families first line of contact
- Streamlines communication between the school and family

Content Teacher

- Proactively updates families about learning and assignments in the academic class
- Individually contacts families of any students where there is an academic concern for the class

Jefferson Academy

Teachers:

- “Family Engagement has invested students more so in raising academic achievement, SRI Scores, and minimizing referrals for bad behavior.”
- “It has made a huge positive impact on our school culture- parents and families feel welcomed and the lines of communication are strong!”



Families:

- 100% of families agreed or strongly agreed that “Because of the SLC, I have a better sense of how my child is doing in his/her classes.”
- “I really appreciate the SLC program for working with Makayla and helping me understand my daughter's academic goals and where she might need help.”
- “I think these SLCs are a great way for the kids to understand where they are and what they need to do to improve. Being able to see for themselves where they are academically makes a great difference in how they can excel in school.”

Kids:

- ***Increased Student Achievement:*** More students made honor roll since implementing SLCs.

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Five Roles that Accelerate Learning



College Readiness and Success Partnerships



Expose families to college campuses

College access programs can both build college aspirations and help students pick the right school by providing students and families with the opportunity to visit college campuses.



Provide timely, accurate information

In order to equip parents with the knowledge to guide. College access programs should span over multiple years and share information at relevant times when parents can act on it.



Create parent networks

Parent networking transmits both college aspirations and information and enforce shared expectations, goals, and values that increase students' chances of succeeding in college.



Build trusting relationships

To empower and invest parents in guiding their child to and through college, program leaders must approach families as assets to students' success and build trusting, positive relationships with them and their children.

College Readiness Partnerships in Action



Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Families:

After the campus visit tour

- 100% of parents felt better equipped to help their child navigate the application process.
- 100% of parents felt better equipped to help their child select the right college.

After the bimonthly seminars

- 92% of parents felt equipped to navigate the financial aid process.
- 100% of parents felt equipped to help their child navigate the first year of college.

Kids:

- **Increased Match:** In 2013, 36% of students selected schools with a 60% or greater 5-6 year graduation rate, the following year the number of students increased to 56%.
- **Improved Persistence:** In 2013, 59% of Ellington participants persisted to their second year. In 2014 80% of students from this cohort are still enrolled in college and are persisting



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Discussion

What stood out to you or resonated with you?

What are you still wondering?

What would you add to the conversation?

What are the implications for school leaders and educators' engagement of families in your context?

Closing

- Thank you for your participation.
- If you would like more information/resources, please contact me:

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