An Invitation to Parent Participation in Elementary Schools

We invite you to use the ideas and activities we did at our schools to better improve parent participation at your school. We hope they work for you!


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The title of this book is “An Invitation to Parent Involvement.” In keeping with that theme, all of the activities have been written in the format of an invitation. We are ‘inviting’ parents to get involved!

**This party is given by:** [Name of the school counselor and school]

**You’re Invited to:** [Name of the activity]

**WHO:** One of the six keys to parent involvement and category of Epstein’s model / “who’s hosting the party”

**WHAT:** describe the activity

**WHERE:** where the activity takes place

**WHEN:** time of year / time of day / etc.

**WHY:** purpose / objective

**PLEASE BRING:** materials, etc.

**HOW TO GET THERE:** planning directions, etc.

**RSVP – RealityS Versus Plans:** What really happened as compared to what was planned or a kind of evaluation of the activity including pitfalls, tidbits to know to make the activity more successful, etc.
This project is the result of the implementation of the Counselor and Parent Partnerships (CAPPs) Grant.

The three-year (2003 – 2006), US Department of Education grant was awarded to Tucson Unified School District’s Guidance and Counseling Department. The focus of the grant was to

- decrease the student-to-counselor ratios at target sites,
- implement the American School Counselor Association National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs and
- follow Epstein’s model for parent involvement.

**Results:**

Total number of parents attending events/activities at each target site.

![Bar graph showing the total number of parents attending events/activities at each target site for the years 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06.]

Total number of events/activities at each target site

![Bar graph showing the total number of events/activities at each target site for the years 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06.]

<table>
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- **2003-04**
- **2004-05**
- **2005-06**
Joyce Epstein and Parent Involvement

What exactly does parent involvement mean? Does it mean more parents in the classroom? *An Invitation to Parent Participation* has been created to help answer some of these questions. In this booklet, we give examples of different activities that were conducted in our schools to increase parent involvement.

Student achievement is the number one goal of all people involved with education whether it is the families, teachers, principals, or community members. Every parent wants their child to learn and be successful in school. Teachers and principals want students to achieve high scores on standardized tests, and community members want to know that their local schools are high performing and producing quality students. The best way to achieve this goal is to work together and actively create a school partnership that produces intelligent, happy and successful students.

The most prominent model for parent involvement is *Epstein’s Six Types of Involvement* (Epstein, 2001). Epstein states that *Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making,* and *Collaborating with the Community* are all keys to successful parent involvement. Joyce Epstein describes *Parenting* as the process of helping parents understand their children’s development. She uses workshops as an example for presenting information to the parents. In *Communicating* she describes the different strategies that can be used to inform the parents, such as newsletters, postcards, and notes home. The next key is *Volunteering,* and although most people often think volunteering is the only way a parent can get involved, this is clearly not the case. Volunteering means that a parent can provide training or be involved by improving parent recruitment. The fourth type of involvement is *Learning at*
Home which includes involving the family in the child’s learning through activities at home. An example of this might be helping their child with homework. The fifth type of involvement is Decision Making. This includes involvement through the PTO/PTA, Site Council, committees and other school advocacy groups. The final key is Collaborating with the Community where parents can take the initiative to coordinate community resources and services for families. These six types of involvement are essential in trying to get parents engaged in their child’s education.

The role of the school counselor is constantly evolving and developing. With the development of the ASCA (American School Counselor Association) Model, the role of the school counselor has become more defined. School counselors are becoming more academic based and less mental health based employees. With this trend, school counselors need to be prepared to do their part and contribute to the overall school achievement. One way to assist in this is to create more parent involvement. When looking at the job description of a school counselor and examining school tests results it is important to see the connection of parent involvement.

The school counselor is expected to help with the academic goals of their school. Taking a brief look at a current job description from Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), it is easy to see the connection. In the summary, the main purpose of the school counselor is to implement the Comprehensive Competency Based Guidance program and it also states that a school counselor “should meet the needs of the students, consult with teachers, staff and parents to enhance their effectiveness in helping students, and provides support to other educational programs.” The counselor is to provide support to the school
through their educational programs. In other words, the counselor is also to help in the educational goals of the school. In section four of the job description, it states that the counselor is to “conduct in-service programs for faculty, parents, and community members”. The job description also mentions “conduct or provide opportunities for parent education programs”. This can mean having GED classes, parenting classes, English classes, or anything that will help parents. The goal of the school counseling program includes parents and families in helping to increase student achievement.

Parent involvement can make such a big difference for students. It is extremely important to have parents be engaged in their child’s learning. TUSD has also made Parent Involvement in the schools a Board Policy. TUSD discusses effective two-way communication, parent involvement in decision making, working with parents for good student attendance, and allowing parents access to instructional materials.

**Literary Research**

There were several articles that mentioned the importance of parent involvement and the successes of other schools. Each article discussed different methods that can be used to improve parent involvement in your school.

In the first article, *Beyond the classroom walls: The rediscovery of the family and community as partners in education*, the author, Cairney, takes a historical view in exploring the emerging interest in school partnerships. The author states that there is a clear correlation between school success and home factors. Cairney also discusses the need for schools to respond to the diverse cultural resources of families in positive ways, rather than simply attempting to transmit school knowledge to them.
The second article, *The counselor’s role in advancing school and family partnerships*, discusses the role of the school counselor. The author gives school counselors a direction for playing a major role in the involvement of parents by developing partnerships between schools and families. Four guiding principles identified were: that partnership efforts must (a) be coordinated and integrated across the six types, (b) become an integral part of the school’s organizational and operating structure, (c) identify and use effective parent and teacher models, and (d) maintain ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all program efforts. The primary emphasis would be for counselors to coordinate the efforts of diverse groups (site councils, partnership working groups, curriculum committees) in developing and implementing school improvement plans.

The third article, *The 10th school revisited: Are school/family/community partnerships on the reform agenda now*, the author, Davies, offers recommendations for changing the culture of schools in the United States so that partnership is a way of life that offers benefits to all who are engaged and becomes a tradition rather than a funded project. Davies suggests that programs must be 1) carefully designed, with the participation of all those affected by them; 2) based whenever possible on research evidence; 3) faithfully executed; 4) objectively evaluated; and 5) sustained over time.

In the fourth article, *Effects on student achievement of teachers’ practices of parent involvement*, the author used data from 293 third and fifth grade students in Baltimore City, who took the California Achievement Test (CAT). The tests scores were taken from 14 classes, each teacher using a different type of parent involvement, with learning activities at home. Epstein was able to show
that the parent involvement through Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), improved the reading and math scores because parents were able help their children at home. The parents understood the homework and were able to get involved in their children’s work.

The fifth article, *Whose community schools? New discourses, old patterns*, the author, Keith, investigates the concept of community schools, family involvement in schools, and partners for improvement. Keith describes the concept of the school being the inspiration of the community, a community that is engaged and supportive. Family involvement in the schools, describes that evidence that students whose parents are involved are more successful in student achievement.

In the sixth article, *Developing collaborative home-school relationships*, the author focuses on the importance of home-school collaboration and the sympathetic, professional attitude that educators should maintain in their contacts with parents. Information is provided regarding school and parent barriers that can hinder a positive relationship. The author also provides collaborative strategies that can eliminate or at least minimize these barriers.

The purpose of *An Invitation to Parent Involvement* is to give school counselors different ideas to use with Joyce Epstein’s model to help increase student achievement through parent involvement in schools. This booklet is the result of a three year US Department of Education elementary school counseling demonstration grant awarded to Tucson Unified School District. This grant was titled Counselor and Parent Partnerships (CAPPs) and focused on reducing the counselor-to-student ratio and increasing parent involvement in five elementary schools. The activities listed here are examples of actually activities done at the
schools. Through the help of the grant, we were able to increase parent involvement. Hopefully, this booklet will help by increasing parent involvement one school at a time.

References
Dr. Joyce Epstein’s
Six Types of Successful School, Family, and Community Partnerships Involvement

1. **PARENTING:** Helping families establish home environments that support children as students.
   - Suggestions for home conditions
   - Workshops on parenting
   - Parent education courses
   - Family support programs
   - Home visits

2. **COMMUNICATING:** Communicate with families on school programs and student progress.
   - Parent conferences
   - Language translators
   - Weekly/monthly folders
   - Newsletters
   - School handbook

3. **VOLUNTEERING:** Recruitment and organization of parent help and support as volunteers and audiences at the school or school programs.
   - School/classroom volunteers
   - Parent room
   - Survey of availability
   - Parent patrols

4. **LEARNING AT HOME:** Provide families with information and ideas in learning activities at home.
   - Required skills
   - Homework policies
   - Calendars with activities
   - Family math, science, and reading activities
   - Summer learning packets

5. **DECISION MAKING:** Include families as participants in school decisions as leaders and representatives.
   - Parent Teacher Association/Organization
   - Advisory council
   - Advocacy groups
   - District-level councils/committees

6. **COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY:** Coordinate community resources and services to strengthen school programs and student learning.
   - Community activities
   - Information on programs and services in the community
   - Integrate services
   - Alumni participation
PARENTING:
Helping families establish home environments that support children as students.

• Suggestions for home conditions
• Workshops on parenting
• Parent education courses
• Family support programs
• Home visits
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Diana Johnston, Ford Elementary School

YOU’RE INVITED TO: Portfolio Night

WHO: PARENTING

WHAT: Students show their parents the work they have done for that school year.

WHERE: In the student’s classroom

WHEN: End of the School Year

WHY: Give students the opportunity to share with their parents the activities, projects, class work, etc. they have done during the school year.

PLEASE BRING: Folders Reflection Letter Student Work

HOW TO GET THERE:
- Talk with Teachers/Administrator to set up date
- Place date and time on the Marquee or newsletter

RSVP – RealitieS Versus Plans
If possible provide food (can be a food sales project or provided by the community).
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THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Barbara Howes / Davidson Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO: “Working the System” – How to Get the Most From
School for your Kids

WHO:  PARENTING

WHAT:  Small Group Meeting for parents to build a school record.

WHERE:  School Counselor’s Office or in the Computer Lab

WHEN:  The entire school year – between 8:30 and 10:00 AM during
reading block time; also one evening per week (or per month) for
parent’s with a day job.

WHY:  To provide parents with information and activities to help schools
understand children and families.  To help parents know home conditions that
support children as students and provide link to resources.  To provide
information on parenting skills for specific ages.  To teach access to school
records through computer and using parent identification code.  To help parents
understand the importance of building the worker skill of good attendance and
punctuality.  Inform parents about FERPA.

PLEASE BRING:  Cookies, Punch, Tea
Provide Child Care & Interpreter
Handouts or booklets on child development & parenting for
each grade level
Computer

HOW TO GET THERE:  Introduce those who are present.  Show how to get the
most from school for your child.  You are the keeper of the child’s legal school
record until he/she is 18.  Review contents of school record; FERPA; who wants
access.  Use opportunity to discuss importance of school attendance, changes in
curriculum, and to problem solve specifics that stop good school attendance.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans
Works well – best to approach Kindergarten and First Grade parents first as this
is where attendance is most poor; opportunity to refer to your groups and get a
volunteer.  Advertise process in School Newsletter or classroom newsletter.
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THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Heather Lotti / Lyons Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Resource Booth

WHO: PARENTING

WHAT: Family information of current community resources

WHERE: Front hallway of school

WHEN: Parent/Teacher conferences, October

WHY: Community information (brochures, schedules, magnets, etc.) will be collected for a formal booth during Parent/Teacher conferences.
1. Public Library: after school tutoring program, story times, how to get library cards, etc.
2. Poison Control Center: brochures on bites, magnets with phone numbers.

PLEASE BRING: Tri-Fold cardboard stand with information
Copies of brochures from local resources

HOW TO GET THERE:
Place the brochures and the tri-fold cardboard stand in an area of high visibility so that the majority of parents can view during conferences.

RSVP – RealityS Versus Plans:
The public library said that if we have events in the future that they can have someone from the library come out with their own booth to help families sign up for library cards.
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Jeanette Gallus / Vesey Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: School Carnival

WHO: PARENTING

WHAT: School wide Carnival.

WHERE: Classrooms, gym, cafeteria, in school and on school grounds dependent on weather.

WHEN: Spring, Friday night, 5:00-8:00

WHY: Provide an opportunity for parents and children to spend quality time together. Children and their parents play non violent games and spend constructive time together.

PLEASE BRING: Committee to plan activities and events. List of possible activities: Snack Bar with Soda/Snacks; Cake Walk; Bingo; Jumping Castle; Game Booth; Fish Pond; Raffle Baskets. Volunteers to help Letters to Parents Tickets for events Letters of Appreciation for Donations and help

HOW TO GET THERE: Coordinate a committee of parents, teachers and community members to plan the carnival. Brainstorm activities and community agencies that can help. Communicate with parents for volunteers and donations for the Raffle Baskets. The Raffle Baskets can have themes so that donations will be more easily organized. Different classroom can be responsible for different theme baskets. Themes of Baskets could include: Movie Night, Beauty Products, Southwest Cooking, Family Fun Night, etc. Committee members sell tickets to students at discounted price the week before the carnival. Night of the carnival, the committee has volunteers to set up, sell tickets, be responsible for the various activities, and clean up. Provide thank yous for the volunteers and the persons who donated to the event.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: This activity brings many parents and relatives. Networking with families and the community for donations is essential. This is a great money making event for your school as well.
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THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Barbara Howes, Davidson Elementary School

YOU'RE INVITED TO:   Dare to Dream – Make that Dream Come True

WHO:     PARENTING

WHAT:    Family Fun Night – learn to share family dreams for the future and makes dreams come true

WHERE:   Cafeteria

WHEN:    Spring, evening (6:00 – 7:30 PM)

WHY:     To help parents understand how they influence their child’s achievement. To use dreams and reflective thinking to achieve academic goals. Understand the importance of hard work and academic commitment. Understand the influence and impact of attendance on school success. To Have Fun and Play!!!

PLEASE BRING:  Cookies, Punch, Tea  Translators if needed
Stage and props for two skits  Crayons, Markers, Dream Outline
Parent Sign in Sheet and Handouts  Door Prizes
Prep for two skits with students, parents, and staff

HOW TO GET THERE:  Place event on school calendar, principal’s newsletter/classroom newsletter & marquee. Contact parent volunteers to make prop items. Make copies of Dream outline for the artwork. Select student actors and rehears. Have parent sign in sheet and any handouts on child development or the importance of dreams in student achievement. Secure treats and door prizes.

RSVP – RealitieS Versus Plans:
This workshop is best presented during the first semester because of the goal setting theme. Staff indicated they thought this presentation should be done each year for parents. Parent responses: “I didn’t know my kid had dreams.”; “I have forgotten the importance of my own dreams. I need to get back to them.” “I can see the importance of what I do as a parent.”
1. Introductions

2. Purpose of tonight:
   - Have fun
   - Identify kid’s dreams and your dreams
   - Talk about how to make the dreams come true (identifying the dream, goal setting, keeping the dream fresh, watching for changes in the dream, the power of parents in reaching the dream, etc.)

3. Play No. 1 – Dream Ranch
   Have some students and one adult act out this story. Use props or have students read the story to the parents.

4. Discuss with the group briefly the importance of being true to your dream. Talk about the difference between dreams that come when you are asleep and dreams that are the results of awareness (awake dreams). Discuss how both are important.

5. Pass out Personal Dream Artwork sheet. Ask students and parents to think for a minute about their dreams for the future. Ask parents to focus on what dreams they had when they were young and think about the people in their family, school, and neighborhood who supported their dream. How did the family talk about you? What words were used to describe you? Give an example: “That one is independent. There is not stopping him.” “This child likes to debate. I’m certain they are going to be a lawyer.” Ask all to draw their dream(s) for their future on the sheet. After 10 minutes, ask the children and adults to Buddy Buzz (share with each other about their drawings). Suggest to parents that they post their children’s drawings where they can use them and refer to them as they work with their children. Let parents know dreams change often so be alert for the change.

6. Talk briefly about setting goals and planning. Show the parents a mirror. Suggest they are like the mirror reflecting back to the kids their strengths, helping to develop worker skills, and academic skills by showing interest in their student’s progress in school. Complimenting students on good character, “you are a joyful worker”, “always there when we need you to help”, etc., shape kids success. Give a plug for excellent attendance.

7. Play No. 2 – A Modern Fable of the Three Little Pigs from Jist Works, Dream Catchers, provides a story to be acted out by students and one adult.

8. Do the door prize drawings and end promptly after thanking all for attending. Remind of the next parent involvement meeting.

Resources:
The Dream Ranch – Monty Robert’s Story, Chicken soup for the Soul by Jack Canfield and Mark V. Hansen Health Communications, 1993.
“A Modern Fable of the Three Little Pigs” – Dream Catchers Booklet, Part 3:
Make Dreams Come True – Ability, Effort, and Achievement; Jist Works, 8902
Otis Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46216-1003; www.jist.com
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Counselor and Parent Partnerships Grant Project
Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Zulema I. Suarez / Maldonado Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO:  “Bully –Proofing Your School”

WHO:  PARENTING

WHAT:  Bullying workshop to inform parents on bullying and how they can help their children at home.

WHERE:  Library

WHEN:  Beginning of the school year

WHY:  Parents can recognize when their child is being bullied and how they can help them at home.

PLEASE BRING:  Serve food to hold the workshop during dinner time.
Informational worksheets for parents
Contact information for key personnel at school

HOW TO GET THERE:
Gather information from Bully Proofing Your School (ISBN1-57035-279-8), The Bully Free Classroom (ISBN 1-57542-054-6) or other bully prevention resources.
Display time and dates on Marquee, newsletters, and informational sheets

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:
This workshop worked very well at our school. The parents wanted more information and each wanted a DVD of the Ford Elementary student video.
COMMUNICATING:
Communicate with families on school programs and student progress.

- Parent conferences
- Language translators
- Weekly/monthly folders
- Newsletters
- School handbook
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School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Jeanette Gallus / Vesey Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  A Bilingual Party

WHO:  COMMUNICATING

WHAT:  Communicate in English and Spanish (or other languages). Help counselors/educators find resources in other languages to communicate better with parents.

WHERE:  Counselors office

WHEN:  Throughout the year

WHY:  To communicate with all parents. To honor and celebrate other cultures and languages and to provide a vehicle for parents to respond back to school and increase parent participation.

PLEASE BRING:  Translated resources from the Internet, and specific programs as Second Step, Get Real About Tobacco, BEST, Building Esteem for Students Today. Translate counselor activities and provide a signature space for parents to return student’s work.

HOW TO GET THERE:
Check the internet and specific programs as Second Step, etc. for parent information in Spanish. Find translators or teams of parents to help translate information and activities. Example, translate words and simple directions in a guidance activity. Do the activity worksheet in class. Ask students to take the activity worksheet home and talk with parents. Parents sign the worksheet. Keep it simple!

RSVP – RealityS Versus Plans:
School-wide participation of parents increased. Students talked with parents about the activities that they did with the counselor. Parents felt good that they were able to understand classroom activities.
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:   Barbara Howes / Davidson Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO:   Getting to Know You

WHO:   COMMUNICATING

WHAT:   Complete the Getting to Know You form with your Family and Parent Volunteer Survey

WHERE:   In classroom to send home with students

WHEN:   August or upon enrollment

WHY:   To have fun and talk within the family and to the school, to communicate special Family talents and knowledge, and to participate and volunteer in the school in parent’s special way.

PLEASE BRING:
- Survey Form for Backpack Mail (Weekly mail sent via students)
- Prizes for returning form to classroom or student.

HOW TO GET THERE:   Plan the event and survey at the end of the school year for the following school year. Advertise one month ahead in the community newspaper or school brochure of parent involvement. Be sure to have all information used by parents in the necessary languages in addition to English.

RSVP – REALITIES VERSUS PLANS:
Take some time to input data in Excel. Data is useful as a source of parent volunteers for the year. Share parent responses with teachers. Have a list of jobs needed by classroom teacher at the same time you collect parent involvement and volunteer information.
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Geri Cass, Gale Elementary School

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Time for Middle School

WHO: COMMUNICATING

WHAT: Parents discuss/ask questions about transitioning into middle school

WHERE: School library or cafeteria

WHEN: Evening, early spring; before students visit middle school

WHY: To relieve parent anxiety about the middle school experience for their child. They can ask questions and meet middle school personnel.

PLEASE BRING: Handouts from the middle school. Include – a sample schedule, lunch menu with prices, calendar, assignment book, activities, and before and after school programs.

HOW TO GET THERE: Advertise! Include announcements in teacher and principal newsletters about one month before scheduled date. Put on marquee. Send home a flyer.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:
Include elementary and middle school counselors and be sure to have good communication and handout for parents. The parents did ask lots of questions and expressed that this was very helpful.
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Parent Survey

WHO: COMMUNICATING

WHAT: This is a parent survey about the activities and classes

WHERE: Local school

WHEN: Beginning or end of the school year

WHY: This survey gives information concerning how families receive information from school to home. It also monitors how activities from the prior year were accepted and attended. The survey lists a variety of classes which may be of interest to the parents, and includes a section of the “best times” for meetings.

PLEASE BRING: Check and make changes to the form to match your school’s needs. This may be sent home with a school Newsletter or by itself. It works well to have a “contest” with the classes to get the surveys all returned. The survey is translated into Spanish.

HOW TO GET THERE: Use the data collected to set up family/community/school activities for the following year. The collected data provides important as to effective communication between the school & homes.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: We had excellent return of this survey—2/3 of the school population returned the survey. It is easy to fill out and there are only 7 major questions makes it palatable for the families to zip through it. It provides excellent easy data to use in setting up activities and classes.
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson, Reynolds Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO: Astronomy Night—Pie and the Sky

WHO: COMMUNICATING

WHAT: A viewing of the skies through hi-power telescopes and sharing a piece of pie with other families.

WHERE: Outside on the darkest field available, teacher’s lounge or an area for families to enjoy pie together

WHEN: When the sky is at its finest. 6:00-8:00 PM

WHY: This event was in conjunction with the 4th & 5th grade Science Curriculum to include families to experience seeing the skies through ‘state of the art’ telescopes. The Amateur Astronomers of Tucson brought their telescopes to share the beautiful Arizona skies with students and their families. See Saturn and the Moon, close up!

PLEASE BRING: Make Posters; Recruit donations from local bakeries; Teachers to serve; pens, pie cutters, plates, forks, napkins, coffee, sugar & cream, hot chocolate

HOW TO GET THERE: Time & date of meeting on Marquee; in Newsletter; Contact astronomers; Assign jobs to teachers; Get pies from Community donations; Cut pies; Organize families for viewing; Make coffee & hot chocolate; Get a large poster paper to write comments about “What you saw...” to be posted in the hall!

RSVP RealitieS Versus Plans: This was a very successful night! It worked by putting the 4th & 5th grades in charge of it. Many businesses donated pies and many parents brought pies. It was an exciting learning experience and a wonderful opportunity for parents to meet & greet each other. We used our teachers lounge with tables & chairs for our parents. It worked very well, as it put families in close proximity to share & talk to one another.
An Invitation to Parent Involvement  
Counselor and Parent Partnerships Grant Project  
Tucson Unified School District  
School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson, Reynolds Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO: Home to School Journals

WHO: COMMUNICATING

WHAT: These are notebook journals, daily planners for the students to keep track of assignments. The journal becomes a part of the backpack and goes back and forth daily. They serve as communication/comments for parents and teachers.

WHERE: School-to-Home and Home-to-School

WHEN: Every day all school year

WHY: The Journals are a great communication device for families and teachers. Our school adopted the idea for our 5th graders to help the transition from elementary to middle school. They are a responsibility for the students and prepare for Middle School where journals are mandatory.

PLEASE BRING: Discuss use of journals with teachers. Obtain samples of journals from companies, show teachers and gather comments, Submit dollar amount to PTA or source to pay for journals, discuss with Advisory Council

HOW TO GET THERE: Vote on journal, get approval from Advisory Council, order journals, pay for journals, hand out the following school year to all 5th graders. Establish a requirement for students to pay for lost journals.

RSVP – RealitieS Versus Plans: The journals were a tremendous success. It provided easy and constant communication from school to home and back. The students had a difficult time understanding the importance of them at first. Parents had to pay for lost journals and this was a problem for some. If the journal was lost a second time, the student was required to use a paper journal for the rest of the year. It was excellent preparation for middle school.
VOLUNTEERING:
Recruitment and organization of parent help and support as volunteers and audiences at the school or school programs.

- School/classroom volunteers
- Parent room
- Survey of availability
- Parent patrols
An Invitation to Parent Involvement  
Counselor and Parent Partnerships Grant Project  
Tucson Unified School District  
School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Jeanette Gallus, Vesey Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO:  Volunteer Training and Program

WHO:  VOLUNTEERING

WHAT:  Volunteers, parents and community, are trained to help individual students or small groups of students to read.

WHERE:  School gym, cafeteria, or conference room

WHEN:  Fall and Spring. After participants are trained have ongoing monthly meetings. Old and new volunteers can network and share ideas.

WHY:  Many students read below grade level. They do not have parents who will read with them at home. This activity will give students a special opportunity to read weekly with an individual or small group. The purpose is to increase achievement and success for students in reading.

PLEASE BRING:  Teacher survey questioning ways volunteers can help teachers and if teachers would like volunteers. Give invitation to parents or others to the volunteer training. Provide guidelines for volunteers (school rules, tour, reading information) and snacks.

HOW TO GET THERE:  
Organize a committee of parents, school staff and volunteers to plan training.  
Survey all teachers asking specific information and suggestions.  
Organize time and place of training.  
Send invitations to all parents giving information of training specifics and ask for an RSVP.  
Training to include:  Introductions and specific talents to share and wants from the experience; Tour of the School; Discussion of school rules and classroom guidelines; Specific tips to help students read; School and District calendar.  
Provide schedule for future meetings.  
Work with teachers and volunteers to set up schedule.  
Teacher communicates with volunteer using a file that is passed from teacher to volunteer, etc.  
Provide end of the year celebration or recognition of volunteers.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  
Start small, number of volunteers will increase.  
Make sure volunteers have one person with whom they can communicate.  
Volunteers call the day of volunteering to make sure there are no changes for that day.  
Communicate and make sure volunteers feel comfortable.  
This is a rewarding experience for both the volunteers and students.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Julee Dodd, Lyons Elementary School

YOU’RE INVITED TO:  A Volunteer Luncheon

WHO:  VOLUNTEERING

WHAT:  A luncheon to honor/recognize volunteers who have worked in our school and/or with our students during the school year

WHERE:  School cafeteria

WHEN:  Spring during the last quarter  (1:00 PM)

WHY:  To show our appreciation to our volunteers, promote future involvement of volunteers and build/strengthen community support

PLEASE BRING:
•  Funding source to pay for food
•  List of volunteers
•  Invitations
•  Notice/publicity to community-school and classroom newsletters
•  Certificates/Plaques

HOW TO GET THERE:
The best way to plan for this activity is to form a committee and delegate responsibilities.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:
One of the difficulties we encounter each year is making sure all volunteers are notified and included.
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  ___ Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary ____________

YOU’RE INVITED TO:  ___ Holiday Trivia __________________________________

WHO:  VOLUNTEERING

WHAT:  Questions are posted in the hallway for all students/parents to read

WHERE:  School hallway

WHEN:  Holidays (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentine’s Day, etc.)

WHY:  Encourage students to participate in reading trivia questions and
asking parents to help solve them.

PLEASE BRING:  Drop box  Paper  Pencils
                  Trivia questions  Prizes

HOW TO GET THERE:
• Parent volunteers come up with appropriate trivia.
• Trivia is posted in the hallway with a drop box, paper, and pencils for
  students to write their name, room # (or teacher), and answers.
• Trivia questions should be posted on Mondays and all answers checked
  on Fridays.
• Student names are posted at the end of the holiday with the students who
  answered # of questions correctly.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:
Parents may need to help younger students fill out the paperwork.
This party is given by: Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary

You’re Invited to: Parent-Volunteer Room

WHO: VOLUNTEERING

WHAT: Room where parent-volunteers can be involved in the school with volunteer work, meetings, scheduling events, and helping classroom teachers

WHERE: Empty room (big enough for parents to work comfortably)

WHEN: Beginning of the year to be used throughout the school year

WHY: Give parent-volunteers the opportunity to be a part of the school community and help with student achievement.

PLEASE BRING: Teachers to provide projects for parents to work on Grade level baskets Calendar to set up events

HOW TO GET THERE:
- Talk with teachers to provide projects for volunteers.
- Have teachers place items in grade level baskets in the room for volunteers to work on.
- Talk with teachers, administrators, school council members, etc. to set up events

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: Have parent-volunteers fix the room up in a comfortable manner. Encourage more parent volunteers.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Volunteer Recognition Breakfast

WHO: VOLUNTEERING

WHAT: Recognize those who volunteered throughout the school year

WHERE: School

WHEN: End of April or May

WHY: To recognize and show appreciation for all the work volunteers do throughout the school year.

PLEASE BRING: Invitations Pot Luck Breakfast

HOW TO GET THERE: Set up date with administrator. Send out invitations with RSVP. Ask teachers/staff to provide a dish for the breakfast.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: Have teachers/staff provide list of dishes they would bring. Teachers need to provide list of those to be recognized for all volunteer efforts (classroom, field trips, etc.)
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

This party is given by: Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary

You’re Invited to: Problem of the Week

WHO: VOLUNTEERING

WHAT: The problem of the week is posted in the hallway for students to read and come up with solution(s) within the classroom.

WHERE: School – hallway and classroom

WHEN: Spring

WHY: Encourage students to participate in solving problems individually and with the class.

PLEASE BRING: Problems Rewards

HOW TO GET THERE: Parents receive a list of problems from Administrator/Teachers for different grade levels. Parents post in the hallway and students go back to their classes to solve the problem.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans
Parents are to choose which problems will be posted and make sure they are posted in the appropriate hallway (primary/intermediate). Teachers are to turn in their answers to the parents who then post winner names in the hallway.
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Tucson Unified School District  
School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson, Reynolds Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO: The Dad’s Project

WHO: VOLUNTEERING

WHAT: A group of Fathers, Grandfathers, Uncles willing to get involved in their children’s education and help out at the school

WHERE: Local school

WHEN: Year around project; monthly meetings; jobs to do off and on all during the school year

WHY: The two major goals of the Dad’s Project is to inspire and enable dads to participate in their children’s education. It gets them involved in the PTA/PTO, with principals, counselors, staff and teachers. The dads and their son/daughter(s) are able to identify and complete projects that improve the school.

PLEASE BRING: Agenda, suggestions from teachers about projects, information about the Dad’s Project, sign-up forms, pens, White Board, calendar, snacks

HOW TO GET THERE: Time and date on the marquee, in parent newsletter, contact a speaker to explain the project, get a list of things needing done in the classrooms & around the school, tax credit forms and explanation of the tax credit, Ideas for large projects, permission from the district to have the project, fund raising ideas, buy snacks!

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: Many dads turned out for the initial meeting— “Dads & Donuts” at 7:00 AM. Most wanted to get involved, but didn’t come to the follow-up meetings. Many dads wanted to do the manual labor. It was difficult to find a leader. We began with 7 committed dads. This worked. We are in our second year and a leader has come forward. We have a HUGE playground project and the dads are all willing to help when called upon. We have kept a running list of dads. We are now taking pictures of the Dads doing projects with their son or daughter. It is fun to show them off! Do not get discouraged. It is a GREAT endeavor!
LEARNING AT HOME:
Provide families with information and ideas in learning activities at home.

- Required skills
- Homework policies
- Calendars with activities
- Family math, science, and reading activities
- Summer learning packets
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THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Bully Book

WHO: LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT: Book of bully stories written by students that students can read to their parents.

WHERE: School - classroom

WHEN: Middle of school year

WHY: Students should be able to address bully issues and share them with parents at home using the book as a resource.

PLEASE BRING: Bully stories

HOW TO GET THERE: Each student is to write a bully story using the format of who, what happened, where, when, and close the story with what did you do about it. Collect the stories and place in a book format for students to read and reread with class and parents.

RSVP – RealityS Versus Plans: Teachers can do this as a class activity or the counselor can make it part of their bully prevention lessons. All students should have a copy of the book and practice reading in class.
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Reading Challenge

WHO: LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT: Parents are to listen to their child read or to read aloud with their child.

WHERE: Home

WHEN: Spring activity

WHY: Encourage students to read with their parents/families on a regular basis for at least 15 minutes every day.

PLEASE BRING: Dragon Reading Log Award

HOW TO GET THERE: Provide each student with Dragon & Reading Log
For every 15 minutes read the student/parent is to color in a scale on the dragon. When each section is complete – student will receive a prize and name is placed in the hallway.

RSVP – RealitieS Versus Plans
If prizes are not available, create a bulleting board or other display to recognize students’ achievements.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Barbara Howes / Davidson Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Family Literacy Night

WHO: LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT: Love of Reading Week:
"The Importance of Reading Aloud"— February 15
“Read to Me” --November 16

WHERE: Library

WHEN: Spring and Fall, 6:30-7:30

WHY: To increase Reading scores, communicate with parents about the changes in literacy education, to provide a time for parents, children and teachers to enjoy reading together, to develop positive community/school relationships and to encourage success in literacy for all students. This is also a great time to explain the DRA/DIBLES or other monitoring reading test scores used in the school and explain the importance of monitoring individual student progress.

PLEASE BRING: Speakers, or Readers, Selected books for the evening’s demonstration, Evaluation for the parents, Interpreter

HOW TO GET THERE: Plan and distribute flyers weekly by “Back Pack Mail,” three weeks prior to the Literacy Night. Advertise in the school newspaper and the Parent Participation Brochure, on the Marquee, Secure interpreter, Line up Readers/ Speakers.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: Light attendance, need to advertise consistently and offer “door Prizes” perhaps books.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Barbara Howes, Davidson Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Family Math Night

WHO: LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT: Family fun math activities for both parents and children

WHERE: Various classrooms

WHEN: Quarterly

WHY: To increase math scores and communicate to parents the changes in math/science education to prepare students for the next century. To provide a time for parents, children and teachers to enjoy mathematics and science together and encourage success in math/science for all students, especially populations who have historically been denied access. To improve community/school relationships.

PLEASE BRING: Openers, Graphs, Activities to address current curriculum, Whole group activities, Processing activities and graphs, Career speakers, Cookies, punch, tea, Closing remarks and Evaluation.

HOW TO GET THERE: Send invitations, Prepare activities, Gather materials, Enlist teachers, Advertise on the marquee, newsletter, bulletin board.

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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  Mad Science & Ice Cream Social

WHO:  LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT:  Science at its finest. Families learn and share in the fun and excitement of science with a “Mad Scientist.” Ice cream social following the “Mad Scientist” to raise money for our Dad’s Project.

WHERE:  Auditorium, Cafeteria or general large room and a hall or foyer

WHEN:  Spring, 5:30-7:00 PM

WHY:  To bring science to a fun level and let the families experience exciting experiments! It is a wonderful way to arouse the interest of how the world works. This Program is very educational and enlightening! Then enjoy the delicious ice cream with other families and your donations go to support the projects of the Dad’s Project.

PLEASE BRING:  Make posters, Contact Bill Herron, meet with PTA to provide funding, Meet with teachers and decide if teachers also want to participate with science booths, Contact ice cream merchant, bowls, spoons, money box—change, coordinate with teachers to set-up, clean-up and sales of ice cream, ice cream scoops from cafeteria, coordinate freezer space.

HOW TO GET THERE:  Time & date of Mad Science on Marquee, in Newsletter. Contact Mr. Herron to finalize, Assign jobs to teachers, get ice cream from merchant, set up tables & service, put up signs, get money box.

RSVP RealitieS Verses Plans:  AWESOME! This was a very successful evening. The ice cream sale generated about $100.00. The families enjoyed the delicious ice cream and price it right. We special ordered ‘choice’ ice cream—Rocky Road, French Vanilla, Strawberries –n- Crème, and Orange Sherbet. The ice cream sales were fast and easy. This is a definite Family Night to do next year and will generate more families.
This party is given by: Diana Johnston / Ford Elementary

You’re Invited to: Book Exchange

WHO: LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT: Students exchange used books

WHERE: School classroom

WHEN: Love of Reading Week

WHY: Encourages students to read with their parents/families. Students are able to choose books.

PLEASE BRING: Used Books Tickets/coupons

HOW TO GET THERE:
Students are to bring in used books they no longer read at home and exchange them for another used book. Students will receive a ticket/coupon for each book they bring in. At lunch or specified time students will be allowed to use the coupons to ‘purchase’ books to take home.

RSVP – RealitieS Versus Plans
If tickets are not available a number can be given. Have enough volunteers to manage the books and help with the exchange & set up. Have classes come in one class at a time.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Julee Dodd / Lyons Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  Book Exchange

WHO:  LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT:  Students bring books from home to exchange with other students at school

WHERE:  Library

WHEN:  February, during “Love of Reading Week”

WHY:  To promote reading at home and give families an opportunity to exchange books without having to purchase new ones

PLEASE BRING:  A space for the book exchange, letters home explaining the activity, follow-up notes, book coupons, paperclips, zip-lock bags, volunteers to organize books into categories, teachers will need an area to collect books.

HOW TO GET THERE:  Two weeks prior, the letter to parents went home, as the books were brought in, the student was given a coupon, one for each book brought in.  His/her name written on the back.  The coupons were kept in the baggies, one for each book.  Books were collected from each classroom and taken to the Library and organized.  The day of the exchange, the students came at lunchtime to exchange their coupons for a “new” book.  Any extra books were given to students who were scheduled for a lesson with the Librarian the next day.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  It was a tremendous success in recycling!  The families enjoyed new books and the students were excited.  It went so well—we decided to do it next year for the families, not just the students!  Volunteers were greatly appreciated for this activity.
THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Jeanette Gallus / Vesey Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO:  Parent Workshop

WHO:  LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT:  Parent workshops will be provided as per parent needs and wants which were determined by surveying parents.

WHERE:  Cafeteria, Conference room

WHEN:  Fall and Spring

WHY:  Help parents to help their children to be successful in school by giving resources and options and learning new ways to help their children at home. Parent want to know how to help children with homework, self –esteem and particular subjects.

PLEASE BRING:  Parent survey conveying needs, Appoint a committee to determine who, what, where, how needs will be met, Letter to parents, Gather materials needed, Refreshments, Evaluation to be filled out by parents at the end of the workshop.

HOW TO GET THERE:  Determine the needs and wants of the parents using the data gathered on the parent survey. Establish a committee of parents and staff to plan the workshop. Set the place, time, date, and participants. Appoint speakers and facilitators to do the workshop.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  The workshop for parents is very individual and specifics will be determined by surveying parents and providing much communication and reminders to parents to come.
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School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO:  Talent Show

WHO:  LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT:  Talent Show for K-5 with a chosen Theme

WHERE:  Local School--stage

WHEN:  End of the school year

WHY:  The number one reason is to communicate the whole child learning to the community and the families. Our school works closely with the OMA (Opening Minds through the Arts) and this is a way to display the talents of our students. It provides for great team work, as the students enjoy working with others to show off their talents! Music and academics are closely linked and the Talent Show is a marvelous way to embrace both.

PLEASE BRING:  Music teacher, newsletter, marquee to advertise, video camera, PowerPoint presentation, microphone, audio equipment

HOW TO GET THERE:  Enlist Music teacher or talented parents willing to spend time in rehearsals. Set “try-out” dates. Select students who will be participants. Set rehearsal times and have teachers supervise. Select a teacher to take pictures and do a power point to show at the end of the presentation.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  The Talent Show has been a tremendous success for all involved. It is a rewarding experience for the students, teachers and parents. We have an outstanding turnout of parents. The PowerPoint at the end of the Show is touching. One of the teachers put the rehearsal pictures to the tune of Let Them Be Little by Billy Dean. There wasn’t a dry eye in the place!!
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO: Computer Access Night, Book Fair & Chili Night

WHO: LEARNING AT HOME

WHAT: Book Fair; Parental Access Computer Class; Chile & Cornbread

WHERE: Teachers Lounge, Computer Classroom, and a close by room to display books for Book Fair.

WHEN: Fall, 5:30-7:30pm

WHY: BOOK FAIR--Purchase books for your child. The funds go to the PTA to provide services & projects for the school.
PARENTAL ACCESS—learn to access your child’s records on your home computer.
CHILI & CORNBREAD—enjoy a bowl of chili & cornbread with other neighborhood families

PLEASE BRING: Order chili & cornbread & apple cider. Use community resources or ask families to donate. Work with District to have a facilitator to give a class on Parental Access to student information. Set up Book Fair with the PTA. Reserve rooms for computers, book fair and tables to serve the chili. Recruit teachers to help serve & clean up. Bowls, cups, napkins.

HOW TO GET THERE: Time & date on marquee, newsletter, Arrange for chili to be delivered, set up bowls, utensils, napkins, signs for directions, check with PTA president to see Book Fair is in order, money box, meet and greet technology supporters, set up lab.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: This was a tremendous success! Proximity is a key! Set up the Book Fair next to the Computer Classroom. It worked so well for us. As the families finished shopping at the Book Fair, they stopped to have dinner with other families in our teacher lounge! The local restaurant donated chili and parents sent in cornbread and apple cider.
DECISION MAKING:
Include families as participants in school decisions as leaders and representatives.

• Parent Teacher Association/Organization
• Advisory council
• Advocacy groups
• District-level councils/committees
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  School Improvement Committees

WHO:  DECISION MAKING

WHAT:  Three committees comprised of teachers and a facilitator: Student Behavior Committee, Student Achievement Committee, School / Community Outreach Committee

WHERE:  Library, or meeting room

WHEN:  Monthly meetings, more quick meetings if need arises

WHY:  To include teachers in leadership roles and work as a team to promote and make decisions pertaining to expectations of student behaviors. To look at data and make decisions concerning test scores in reading, writing, math and Professional Development. To use community resources for the betterment of the school and encourage families, in the community, to know, support, and encourage each other. To promote neighborhood awareness and commodore.

PLEASE BRING:  Willingness, ideas, comments, concerns, data, resources, pen, paper and a smile!

HOW TO GET THERE:  Set meeting time. Look at data to get a base line as to scores, behavioral referrals and categories. Assess needs of the school. At a teacher meeting, discuss needs and the three groups needed to accomplish the needs. Let teachers make the choice as to the “committee;” make sure they are balanced by grade level. Committee sets 2-3 goals and strategies to achieve the goal by semester of year’s enc.

RSVP – RealityS Versus Plans:  This idea began with the help of a grant. It worked so well, our school decided to tweak our committees at the end of the grant and continue to meet and make decisions in this manner. The teachers had a “buy in” to the decisions at our school. The use of data makes the goals REAL. If met with bits of resistance…persevere! Majority rules! And there is a job for everyone.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  _Zulema I. Suarez, Maldonado Elementary_

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  _Guidance Advisory Council_

WHO:  DECISION MAKING

WHAT:  The Council helps the counselor define his/her role and guides them to be successful in their implementation of the CCBG and other Counseling activities throughout the school year.

WHERE:  Library, or meeting room

WHEN:  Meetings held three times a year, (October, January, April)

WHY:  Parents are able to advise and give input into the school Counseling Program and learn the necessary role of a counselor in the school. The parents also understand the importance of CCBG, and the presence of the counselor in the classroom.

PLEASE BRING:  Guidance Lesson materials and other materials used throughout the year.  (Second Step, Character Ed., CCBG lessons, etc.)
- Counselor Goals for the school year
- Data used to derive at these goals

HOW TO GET THERE:  Send a call for parents through teachers, the newsletter and the marquee. Ask for volunteers. Teachers and parents are urged to be a part of this committee.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  The parents in the Advisory Council were all very involved and gave their opinions on the struggles their children were having. This enabled the Counselor to design his/her Guidance Lessons to more meet the needs of the student population.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  S.M.A.R.T. (Student Management and Referral Team)

WHO:  DECISION MAKING

WHAT:  Child Study Team, complete with Principal, Counselor, Psychologist, Nurse, Social Worker, Special Education teachers, Classroom teacher and Parents

WHERE:  Library, or meeting room

WHEN:  Weekly meetings—1-3 hours

WHY:  The purpose to this Team is to look at the “whole child,” including, but not limited to: academics, behaviors, medical conditions, and special needs. The purpose of this team is to set goals with specific, measurable interventions, including person(s) responsible for carrying out those interventions. The Team reconvenes in 4-6 weeks to measure progress of lack thereof, and take the next step to ensure adequate guidance and support for the student.

PLEASE BRING:  Sign-up sheet for teacher referrals; Set up a meeting with the parent(s). At meeting, bring a 3-ring notebook, pen, agenda, SMART Referral form—completed by teacher and case manager. A follow-up Summary form

HOW TO GET THERE:  Set up a time weekly for the meetings. Appoint a facilitator, and calendar person. Select Case managers for each case (use special Ed teachers aligned with grade levels). Design a referral form and a Summary form. Forms are filled out by the classroom teacher and the Case Manager who is usually the Special Ed teacher. Meetings should be timed to approx. 30 minutes per student. Set 2-3 specific goals and 2-3 measurable indicators to ensure goals are met. Always include a "Parent piece." At the end of each meeting, the Case manager writes a Summary of the meeting, which includes the Goals. This is mailed home to the family.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  This was a task! However, it is an outstanding Team that is full of talent, ideas, and knowledge to meet the needs of every student brought to the Team for consultation. The “forms” were the most difficult, but when completed, the Team was dynamite!
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Tucson Unified School District  
School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: PTA / PTO

WHO: DECISION MAKING

WHAT: The PTA’s is the Parent/ Teacher Association whose primary focus is for the children. They serve as a liaison between the families, students and the school. This organization’s other focus is on fundraising.

WHERE: Local school, Meeting Room

WHEN: Monthly meetings and daily workspace for coordinating activities. Room to support fundraisers such as Book Fairs and Holiday Gift Stores.

WHY: The PTA serves as a liaison between the families, students and the school. All families are asked to join. The membership dues are $5.00 per year, of which a portion goes to the National PTA and the remainder stays at the school. The PTA officers are elected and meet monthly with the members to plan activities, solve problems, promote fundraisers to purchase needed supplies for the classrooms and school, and to fund incentives for the students. An active PTA is vitamins to the school!

PLEASE BRING: Involved, willing parents! Recruit adults that have time and skills to begin your program. Gather fundraiser ideas. Contact other PTA/PTO for ideas. Membership notices run off. Call Headquarters to get started 1-800-307-4PTA. Contact local business to entertain. Speak to teachers about joining.

HOW TO GET THERE: Elect officers. Set time and dates for meetings. Propose budget ideas. Membership notices out to all students. Set up booth to recruit members. Set a Fundraiser on a Welcome Back Night. Follow up local business, such as McDonalds to do a “Mc'Reynolds Night” to accompany the Welcome Back Night.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: Teachers are the most important resource. PTA Budget should include a fund for each teacher and this will encourage teachers to recruit family members. If membership is difficult, find the most outgoing person available to be in charge of Membership drive. PTA is a time consuming very worthwhile endeavor. Publicize what your PTA is doing. Be vocal that the school NEEDS an active PTA. Support, support, support your Officers! It grows with each year.
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Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson, / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Site Council

WHO: DECISION MAKING

WHAT: This is a community working together to improve student achievement by means of shared decision making. The group is comprised of the school principal, teachers, staff, and community members.

WHERE: Library for meetings

WHEN: Third Thursday of the Month, 5:00-6:00pm

WHY: Site/Advisory Council is a proactive group that meets to investigate school data, improve student achievement, forms committees, and task forces for site-specific purposes, approves, researches, develops, and implements site-specific proposals. They set site goals for the year; approve initiations and ideas, which affect the entire school site.

PLEASE BRING: Check district regulations for an Advisory Council, Principal invites teachers, and community members to volunteer. Examples of bylaws and constitution for Site Councils, set specific times to meet, provide snacks, agenda

HOW TO GET THERE: Post agenda, at meeting, discuss agenda, appoint facilitator and secretary, explore data such a ‘School Quality Survey’ and test scores, discuss school goals for the coming school year

RSVP – Realties Versus Plans: Our Site Council works together in a very positive way. Every year we are required to do an Evaluation Review. We focus on the question that states, “Are all members heard and can share their respected opinions?” It is important each culture is represented and respected on your council. The bylaws will be tweaked each year. Learning to understand and interpret data can be a big job. It is important all members learn to read the data and make decisions based upon it. Providing links and lines of communication between school and home is a necessary piece of Site Council. Teachers find it informative and empowering to be a part of the Site Council. Positions are rotated every three years and most teachers are willing to be a part of the Council. Inviting students to serve on the Council is a wonderful addition and experience for all concerned.
An Invitation to Parent Involvement  
Counselor and Parent Partnerships Grant Project  
Tucson Unified School District  
School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Jeanette Gallus/ Vesey Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  Parent Survey

WHO:  DECISION MAKING

WHAT:  Parent Survey in English and Spanish to access parent needs

WHERE:  Counselor’s Office, distributed to all students to be returned to school

WHEN:  Beginning of school year, or the end of the school year

WHY:  To access parent’s needs in the way of communication, parenting classes, family needs, and volunteer feedback. The survey is given, and then parents with specific needs, or information to share, are contacted and provided opportunities to plan activities, and help, or volunteer at the school.

PLEASE BRING:  Translated parent survey; Tallied results by grade level; Recommendations as per results of survey

HOW TO GET THERE:  Using data. And specific informational needs, write a survey for your parents. Send the survey home with students to be completed by parents, (incentives work to get all surveys back in a timely manner); Gather and tally all information according to grade levels; Share information with appropriate staff and committees to make recommendations for future school and Guidance Counseling planning. Contact parents to participate in volunteering and sharing their expertise.

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans:  Participation was tallied at 43%, which included families with more than one child in the school. A translated survey helped participation. The survey only consisted of 7 major questions and was easy to understand and complete.
COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY:

Coordinate community resources and services to strengthen school programs and student learning.

• Community activities
• Information on programs and services in the community
• Integrate services
• Alumni participation
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Geri Cass, Gale Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Gale Pride Patrol

WHO: COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

WHAT: Service projects for grades 2 - 5

WHERE: School

WHEN: First week of school; ongoing during the year

WHY: Students accept responsibility for service to the school community

PLEASE BRING: Great attitude, willingness to give up some of your lunch time, Volunteers, List of Patrol Duties, permission slips, scheduler, training, celebration

HOW TO GET THERE: Select a willing volunteer (teacher, custodian, monitor, aid) Meet with the principal, other interested adults, survey the students, and determine what jobs need to be done, the number of students to do them, and the criteria for selecting the students to do the jobs. Meet each class and tell them about Pride Patrol. Hand out permission slips (signed by parents & teachers). Train students by grade level for each job. Make a rotating schedule and place in at least 2 areas; advise students when it is their turn, what they are doing and remind how-to do the job. Supervise. Plan a Pride Patrol appreciation celebration at the end of the year for a job well done! Works great for monitoring the halls at lunchtime!

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: We wrote a mini grant to pay for advisors, badges and clipboards for the Patrol. We also paid for stickers for positive behavior. The Counselor did the training. “How to be a Role Model and Resolve Conflict.” A teacher planned to be involved and we worked the Service Project into a grant. Once the initial materials are purchased, the Patrol can go on year after year. We now have a stipend that pays a Supervisor to handle the Patrol. It works very well at our school!
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Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Barbara Howes, Vesey Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: A Safe Family Halloween Party

WHO: COLLABORATIONG WITH COMMUNITY

WHAT: Fun, safe, enjoyable party where kids and adults can have dinner, share and enjoy Halloween

WHERE: School building

WHEN: Halloween eve or a scheduled day close to it. 5:30-8:00 PM

WHY: This event provided a safe Halloween experience for our children and gave families them to meet each other, communicate, interact, and have fun. This event provided the business community to participate and support a school event.

PLEASE BRING: Set date, notes home for volunteers, set up committees, candy donations, community donations for dinner such as: pizza, chili, cornbread, juice. Candy boxes, volunteers. Games, cotton candy machine, Popcorn machine, prizes. Advertise on the marquee, newsletter, in the local businesses.

HOW TO GET THERE: This takes a lot of preparation. Be prepared for a large turnout! Make the candy boxes and designate the rooms to be set up for trick-or-treat. Set up all games & prizes with volunteers to run the games. Lay out food lines and tables. Get all food and drinks in place and volunteers to serve. Line up custodial staff and clean-up crew. Secure money box for the things that cost. May want to charge an initial fee to get in and include dinner (bowl of chili, piece of pizza). Have a great clean-up crew!

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: It was a TREMENDOUS success for the parents and the children. Parents were grateful to have a safe place to celebrate Halloween. It was a very popular event with 500-700 in attendance! The best part was the opportunity to communicate with families.

This event must be organized and there must be workers assigned to each area: food, movie, set up, candy trick or treat stations. A photographer could be added. The possibilities are endless. Be prepared to do it year after year. It is a very popular event.
An Invitation to Parent Involvement
Counselor and Parent Partnerships Grant Project
Tucson Unified School District
School Counseling Department
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU’RE INVITED TO: Student of the Month—Optimist Club

WHO: COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

WHAT: Student of the month for an outstanding 5th grader

WHERE: Local restaurant

WHEN: Monthly Luncheon—the last Wednesday of each month

WHY: Monthly, the local Optimist Club treats a selected 5th grade student and their parents to a nice lunch to celebrate the outstanding student. They are honored with words from their teacher for the selection and a beautiful plaque to be hung up in the school award hall. It is an honor to accompany the students.

PLEASE BRING: Contact local service club—Optimist, Lyons, Elks, Rotary Contact representative, arrange date and time for the luncheon, send form to the teacher for details of “Why” the student was selected, plaque from a local sign maker company, Invite parents to the luncheon

HOW TO GET THERE: Put student name in Newsletter; Call parents to assure the number of adults for lunch; Coordinate with Optimist Representative to meet for lunch; Make poster of student’s picture, name, teacher comments for display. Enjoy. At the end of the year, the Optimist Club Members join our “5th grade Promotion” and hand the plaques that have been displayed through the year, to the students of the Month.

RSVP Realities Versus Plans: This is a very successful. It is an honor for the students and their parents. It has been the highest honor at our school. The Service Clubs are so appreciative when we bring the young people to their monthly lunch meetings. The real benefit is that the Service Clubs become a part of the school and it is beneficial for both. They help our school in many ways throughout the year. It is an excellent community/school/family mix.
THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Angela Robinson / Reynolds Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Red Ribbon Week

WHO: COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

WHAT: Red Ribbon Week—Drug Awareness

WHERE: Local School—Parking Lot

WHEN: October

WHY: To raise the awareness of drugs and careers. To understand peer pressure and the drastic effect it has on careers we choose in life.

PLEASE BRING: 18-Wheeler, police car, guest speakers, parking lot, microphone, and red ribbons

HOW TO GET THERE: The father of one of our students is a truck driver. He was the Guest Speaker for our students. He spoke of the determents of drinking, & drugs have on careers in the truck driving industry. He spoke to the students about peer pressure. He also brought his huge 18-wheeler and let the students go inside of the truck. The uncle of the student is a local Policeman. He brought his car and also spoke to the students. He also let them view the inside the Police Car. The Truck Driver and the Policeman then handed out Red Ribbons to the students with the promise to stay Drug Free!

RSVP – Realities Versus Plans: This was a reality experience for the students. They were able to do a follow-up in the classroom about supporting each other in peer pressure times. They wrote thank you notes in the form of an essay to express what they learned by the experience. It made the Red Ribbon Week come to life for them.
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Tucson Unified School District  
School Counseling Department  
Tucson, Arizona

THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY:  Geri Cass, Gale Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO:  Volunteer Programs

WHO:  COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

WHAT:  Volunteer program to help in the classrooms

WHERE:  School site

WHEN:  During the school year

WHY:  To coach reading literacy or math skills. Using the community volunteers is a great way to assist with reading and math skills to increase academic scores.

PLEASE BRING:  Contact local voluntary groups “OASIS, Reading Seeds…” Senior organizations are wonderful for this type of volunteering. Arrange needs of students with teachers, arrange & coordinate times, supply materials, set an introduction period for the volunteers to know the school. Refreshments.

HOW TO GET THERE:  Contact the community volunteer coordinator and get the names and phone numbers of the volunteers. Contact lead person and attend a training to understand how the volunteer organization works. Connect with the teachers and set up times in the classroom. Invite the volunteers to your school for a tour and to meet the teachers they will work with. Get signed permission slips from students. Serve refreshments. This type of volunteer works well alone, after the introduction. They usually work with the students weekly for period of time.

RSVP – RealitieS Versus Plans:  Our school has worked with OASIS and Reading Seeds. Volunteers are already screened and fingerprinted. Many people who have volunteered are elderly and have medical issues. Be sensitive and aware. Send thank you notes to the volunteers. Many of the volunteers come for their hour and stay to help!
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THIS PARTY IS GIVEN BY: Geri Cass, Gale Elementary

YOU'RE INVITED TO: Gale Pride Community Board

WHO: COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

WHAT: Announcements & bulletin board for community and school

WHERE: Main Hallway of School

WHEN: Throughout school year

WHY: This will help build community spirit, pride and involvement. It is a great way to bring awareness of community activities into the school.

PLEASE BRING: A large bulletin board, cover it with paper or fabric. Put a border around it, and “Name It”

HOW TO GET THERE: A group of teachers and the counselor decided to undertake this needed project. The principal helped with the designation a bulletin board in the main hallway as the “Gale Pride Community Board.” A parent helped with the paper and letters. During an in-service, we decided on one contact person to give any community information to and she will post it. A newsletter was sent to parents to advise them to look, read, and report any information they may want to post. We also put names of students attending weekly special luncheon with the principal or other honored luncheons on the Board.

RSVP RealityS Versus Plans: We took time to get it started. It is working well. Suggestion: have a back-up contact person, or reliable volunteer to report the community news and update the Board.