



Recruiting and Selecting Parent Representatives



REACH District and School
Leadership Teams
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Presented by:
Judy Conlin, Mary Sobczak, & Cheri Sylla

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Presentation Outcomes

- How to recruit and select Parent Representatives for your School/District Leadership Teams
- Ways to support your Parent Representatives
- How to define the roles and responsibilities of your Parent Representatives



The Parent Representative on the Leadership Team

"Parents provide us with a perspective that we don't have. They represent our community and families who are our customers. We need their voices on many issues. Sometimes they simply help us see that we are not reaching out to our parents in the right way even though we're working very hard!"
(Elementary Principal)



Why Have Parent Representatives on the Team?

- Research
- Family & Community Involvement is one of the 10 components and part of the context level of the REACH framework
- Parent Involvement in both IDEA and NCLB
- Required by DPI for grant recipients



Research Summary on Parent Involvement in Education

- When parents are involved, students do better academically and socially
 - Parents of all income and educational levels are involved in supporting learning at home
 - Teacher outreach makes a difference
 - Outreach to minority families must emphasize relationship building
 - **Schools that emphasize partnerships involve more parents**
- (New Wave of Evidence 2002)



Characteristics of a Parent Representative

“We want parents to feel comfortable talking with us and sharing their honest perceptions. We look for parents who are interested in being collaborative partners in problem solving. We also hope that parents will help us network with other parents and community members.”
(Grant Project Co-Director)



Characteristics of a Parent Representative

- Has a child or children currently attending the school or district and is not a staff member or spouse of a staff member.
- Has time and energy to make commitment
- Interest and willingness to work as an equal participant on the decision making team.
- Willingness to work collaboratively between families and schools



Characteristics of a Parent Representative

- Understands the need and have the ability to maintain confidentiality
- Asks questions, shares information, gives their perspective and willing to consider other team member's perspectives
- Recognizes that the initiative benefits **All Students**



Characteristics of a Parent Representative

- Questions to consider:
 - What characteristics/attributes is your team looking for in a parent?
 - Looking at our school's/district's demographic make-up, do we have adequate representation on our team? If not, what could we do to ensure that we reach all types of families?



Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Representative

"They expect me to basically represent the views of parents and to ask questions from that "angle". I would be happy to be involved even more if they needed me. The school shouldn't have to "shoulder" the whole burden of the project."
(Parent Representative)



Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Representative

- Attend team meetings
- Provide a parent's perspective
- Actively contribute
- Serve as an equal member, same expectations as any other member
- Attend REACH workshops
 - Beginning School Implementation
 - Framework Appraisal
 - Resource Mapping



Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Representative

Other possible roles:

- Help assist with gathering and disseminating materials/information to families
- Communicate with other families
- Outreach to parents from diverse backgrounds to gain input/feedback
- Help assist with writing articles for newsletters about school improvement plans
- Conduct surveys
- Help assist with planning activities



Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Representative

"We ask our parents to be a part of all REACH sponsored meetings except the Progress Monitoring. They also went to the Wisconsin Promise Conference with our team. They are valued as equal members of this team. They are expected to be at meetings that are appropriate for their collaborative effort and participation, but we understand if family or work obligations interfere at times."

(Elementary Administrator)



Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Representative

"Perhaps if there was another active parent on the team that I could collaborate on a specific task, i.e. brainstorming about increasing parent involvement in general."

(Parent Representative)



Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Representative

- Questions to consider:
 - What basic roles and responsibilities are appropriate for your team's parent representatives?
 - What additional roles would you consider as important in connection with your school improvement plans and family-school-community partnership?



What the Parent Representative can expect

"We support our parent representative by providing background knowledge, using protocols, agenda, and minutes as communication tools, partnering the parent with other team members to complete tasks in the action plan, offering child care, and planning meetings around the schedule of the parent representative whenever possible."
(Elementary Principal)



What the Parent Representative can expect

- Background information on REACH and school/district procedures
- Open communication
- Mentoring/support by a team member
- Explanation of educational jargon and terminology
- Stipend for time and/or childcare



What the Parent Representative can expect

- Encouragement to attend trainings and workshops
- Expenses covered for attendance at trainings and workshops
- Included in planning activities
- Answers to questions in understandable terms



What the Parent Representative can expect

“It has been relatively easy to participate on the Leadership Team because of the training and mentoring I received. They have motivated me to continue my participation by treating me with respect and as an equal.”
(Parent Representative)



What the Parent Representative can expect

- Questions to consider:
 - What type of support can your team provide to the parent representatives on your leadership team?
 - What other needs do your parent representatives have that are not listed on the previous slides?



Training and Networking Opportunities

- “A greater understanding of rules, regulations, and guidelines that need to be followed by the teachers and school.” (Parent Representative)
- “The terms and abbreviations were hard to understand.” (Parent Representative)
- “I would have liked someone to meet with me individually to explain the terms and processes of REACH. (Parent Rep)



Training and Networking Opportunities

- REACH Workshops & Trainings
 - Beginning School Implementation (Required)
 - Framework Appraisal (Required)
 - Resource Mapping (Highly Recommended)
- Other REACH Trainings & Resources
 - Fundamentals of Family Involvement
 - Family Involvement Workshops
 - Role of the Parent on the Leadership Team



Training and Networking Opportunities (other)

- Regional Networking with other Parents
- Communication Workshop
- Overview of NCLB, IDEA, Education Terminology, and Parent Resources
- Culturally Diverse Families/Communities



Training and Networking Opportunities

- Questions to consider:
 - What training needs do your Parent Representatives have when reviewing the Training and Networking List?
 - Would networking with parent representatives from other teams be beneficial?
 - What other training or support is desired or needed?



Parent Resource Organizations

- WI FACETS – Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support, Inc. www.wifacets.org
- WSPEI – Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative <http://http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/parent.html>
- WI PTA – Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association www.wisconsinpta.org
- Parent Plus – Milwaukee www.parentspluswi.org



Parent Resource Organizations

- REACH FIT – Family Involvement Team
Click on Family Involvement at www.reachwi.com
- WI DPI Community Learning and Partnerships Team www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/index.html
- Wisconsin Family Ties www.wifamilyties.org
- Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council www.glitc.org



REACH Resources & Training

- REACH Website: www.reachwi.org
- REACH Centers throughout Wisconsin:
 - CESAs #1 & #5 (Southeast/Central)
 - CESAs #2, #3, & #4 (Southwest/South)
 - CESAs #6, #7, #8 (Northeast/Central)
 - CESAs #9, #10, #11, & #12 (Northwest/North Central)



REACH...For More Information

Grants and General Information

DPI REACH Initiative

Rachel Zellmer

rachel.zellmer@dpi.state.wi.us
608-266-1787

<http://www.dpi.wi.gov/reach>

Professional Development and Publications

CESA 1 REACH Mentor & Technical Assistance Coordination

Michelle Ring
Marianne Smith

mrings@cesa1.k12.wi.us
msmith@cesa1.k12.wi.us
262-787-9569
262-787-9567

www.reachwi.org
