

Increased Engagement: Practical Tips for Your Organization

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Sound Familiar?

- ❑ I had to assume the position of president of our organization because nobody else would do it.
 - ❑ We have three hundred families who are members, but only about ten of them ever do anything.
 - ❑ I am still working with the parent organization, and I don't even have any kids here anymore.
 - ❑ No matter what we do, we can't get parents to come to our meetings.
 - ❑ The same five people do everything.
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Language

Cliques

Parent Ed.
Level

Attitudes of
School Staff

Cultural
Influence

Childcare and
Other Family-
Oriented Issues

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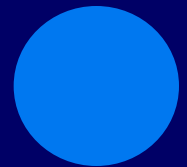
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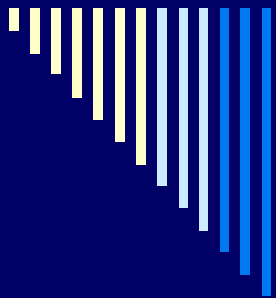
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Building relationships is the most important step toward engaging families in any school. Great posters, frequent newsletters, and exciting events are terrific tools, but without relationships, they create very little action. Getting to know families, and making personal connections with them, is critical.

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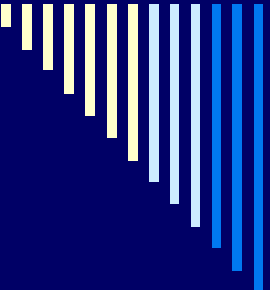
Three Reasons People Do Not Engage

- ❑ Lack of Connection
 - ❑ Lack of Interpersonal Support
 - ❑ Inefficient Environment within the Organization
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Negative Catalysts

- ❑ A parent offers to help with an event but is never contacted with details.
 - ❑ A parent offers her services to help in school but is told that there are already enough volunteers.
 - ❑ Parents share an idea at a parent-organization meeting and are told that the idea was already tried and did not produce the desired results.
 - ❑ A parent comes to a parent-organization meeting and sits in the back row with little interaction from others at the meeting.
 - ❑ A parent volunteers to head an important committee but is told that another parent “always” heads this committee.
 - ❑ A local businessperson sees a parent-organization member once a year—when the member stops by to request a donation.
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Common Characteristics of Engaging Organizations

- ❑ Their leaders communicate and “walk the talk.”
 - ❑ Their individual members value their relationships with leaders.
 - ❑ Members understand how their individual performance contributes to organizational performance.
 - ❑ There are opportunities for personal growth and development.
 - ❑ Members are proud to be associated with the organization.
 - ❑ There a sense of teamwork, with shared goals and responsibility.
 - ❑ The work is challenging and mentally stimulating.
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Respecting Culture

- Translation at meetings
 - Respecting Culture
 - Create a Culture/Ethnicity Based Group
 - Attending Events with Family/Friends
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Increasing Participation

- ❑ Road Signs to Publicize Parent-Organization Events
 - ❑ Start each meeting with an ice-breaker activity that forces parents to mingle outside of their established groups
 - ❑ Have two blank nametags and markers for every meeting
 - ❑ Active members become mentors to new members
 - ❑ Ask new members how they would like to be involved
 - ❑ Take pictures of new members or meeting attendees and post them
 - ❑ Value the time of those who come to your meetings
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Increasing Participation, Continued

- ❑ Personally invite members to meetings
 - ❑ Supply those who were not able to attend with the information that was shared at the meeting
 - ❑ Working with school staff, identify families who are less engaged with the school
 - ❑ Create events and workshops that are grounded in student achievement
 - ❑ Many parents require transportation to meetings
 - ❑ Expand childcare to include tutoring
 - ❑ Publicize your event in multiple languages
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Building Membership

- ❑ “Gifting” several memberships
 - ❑ Does your school have 100 percent teacher membership in your parent organization?
Authentic interest or by subtle coercion?
 - ❑ “Join Here!” signs in storefront windows
 - ❑ Invite local businesses to join the local parent organization
 - ❑ Recognize employees of businesses who are members of the parent organization.
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Building Membership, Continued

- ❑ “Parent-organization membership has its privileges.”
 - ❑ Link the parent organization to student learning.
 - ❑ Establish “Parent Organization Special Teacher” parking
 - ❑ Parent Organization and School Booster Clubs—Joint Membership
 - ❑ Partnership with Local Realtors, Churches
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Sustaining Membership

- *Home Visits*
 - *Testimonials: What this did for me.*
 - *Parent Organization Table: School, Church, Mall*
 - *Hosting Meetings in the Community*
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The Keys

- Meaningful and Relevant to the Participant
 - Linked to Learning and Growth of Children
 - Build Relationships: Trust
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