Family InvolvementInformation and Training Kit

A Presentation Kit for Educators and Parents

By

Maria del Rosario (Charo) Basterra
Director of National Origin/Language Minority Programs
The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, Chevy Chase, MD

Julia Webster Ed.D
Advanced Placement Incentive Program Manager
School Improvement Group
Delaware Department of Education

95-01/04/11/07

Foreword
Ron Houston

Research studies in the area of parent involvement have clearly identified the impact of parent participation in the education of children. It is reviewed in some of that documentation as the greatest predictor of a child's success

Far too often, educators and parents are challenged to develop relationships that result in optimum support for children. The Family Involvement Information and Training Kit (FITTK) addresses that issue. It recognizes the significance of cultural, ethnic and language differences in creating effective educator and parent relationships. It also establishes goals that are part of Delaware school improvement.

As we strive for academic excellence for all children, we welcome this opportunity to make that goal paramount in the lives and work of parents and educators throughout the state.

Acknowledgements

The Family Involvement Information and Training Kit (FITTK) is the result of the joint effort and cooperation between the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center and the Delaware Department of Education. This FITTK will offer educators a set of resources and research-based training tools that will enable them to promote a systemic outreach to parents of minority, ESL, and low-income students in their districts.

We wish to thank Secretary of Education, Valerie Woodruff, and Associate Secretary of Education, Dr. Nancy Wilson, for their continued support of the Advanced Placement Incentive program which has been vital at every stage of the implementation in Delaware.

We also wish to thank Ronald Houston, Director of School Improvement whose steadfast support for parental involvement has made possible the continued outreach to parents and their information about the academic options of their children. His guidance, wisdom, and heartfelt commitment to all Delaware children and parents have been a continuous source of inspiration and encouragement in the development of the Training Kit.

A special thank you goes to Sheryl Denbo, Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, for her contribution on the African American students sections and Joanne Miro, Education Associate, for her assistance in the final stage of the completion of the project.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to Barbara Clendaniel, Administrative Secretary, for proofreading the final version and avoiding us many oversights and Mary Starkey, Secretary, for assembling the Training Kit.

Introduction

Overview, Goals, and Organization of the Kit

The presentation kit is an essential component of the Advance Placement Incentive (API) program initiative in Delaware. Research indicates that parental involvement is critical in helping students succeed in school. Evidence also indicates that when schools develop programs and partnerships to involve families, parents appreciate the assistance and increase the level of their involvement, while students improve their achievement, attitudes, and behaviors. Since family involvement is so important, the kit represents a way to help families become active participants in their children's education, support their academic success, and encourage them to take the most rigorous academic courses available in the schools they attend.

The kit's overarching goal is to assist districts and schools in their efforts to develop a more effective family-school partnership in order to support an increase in the enrollment of diverse students in rigorous college preparatory courses. The purpose of the presentations contained in the kit is to inform parents about the importance of a rigorous high school education which will enable their children to be admitted to college and complete a degree.

The activities in each training unit are based on the assumption that effective parental involvement training must offer parents practical advice to support their children's education. During the presentations, parents will explore the options and opportunities available to students from all socio-economic and ethnic groups and practical strategies to encourage and support their children as they undertake demanding academic courses in middle or high school.

Goals:

The main goals of the Family Involvement Information and Training Kit are to:

- Increase educators' knowledge of strategies to improve cross-cultural communication with parents;
- Provide educators with strategies for overcoming the traditional barriers that prevent ethnic, cultural, and language diverse students from participating in Advanced Placement programs;
- Increase parent's knowledge on the benefits of parental involvement in their children's learning;
- Provide parents with information about Advanced Placement programs and the importance of their children's participation in such programs;
- Provide parents with specific strategies to help their children enroll in Advanced Placement programs.

Description of Kit:

The kit consists of the following sections:

- Section I   Background research information.
- Section II   Four training units to be used by presenters to conduct workshops with parents. The units include specific objectives, pertinent background information, selected activities, copies of overheads and handouts for implementing the activities, training evaluation form, and references. Power Point presentations are available on disk. Presentations, handouts, and evaluation form have been translated into Spanish for Latino parents.
- Section III   Resources and bibliography.

Audience:

The kit's target audiences are families whose children attend middle and high schools. However, many of the themes and activities can be adapted for use at the elementary school level. Secondary audiences include educators working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Selected activities and strategies focus primarily on African American and Latino families but can be adapted for diverse audiences.

How to Use the Kit:

Section I   This section is primarily intended to provide presenters with background information about the key issues and topics related to parental involvement and cross cultural communication. Presenters should read this section before conducting the training. This section can also be used to increase school personnel's knowledge of the importance of parental involvement and their ability to communicate effectively with students and parents of diverse backgrounds.

Section II   This section consists of four training units. The units can be used in a sequence for a day-long conference for parents. They can also be used individually and shortened according to the length of the presentation and the time available.

Section III   This general resource section for parents, presenters, and school personnel can be used to promote further understanding and /or use of additional tools in promoting parental involvement.

SECTION I

Background Research Information

Section I provides a framework for the presenters of the training units. The overview of current issues related to diversity and cultural communication provides educators with knowledge of key concepts and topics to take into consideration as they develop and /or implement stronger partnerships with their culturally and linguistically diverse parents.

As presenters prepare to meet with parents, they should also carefully examine their district school plans to involve parents in the educational process of their children. The presentation and activities will be more effective if the presenters are prepared to respond to parents when they inquire about the school's parental involvement plans and the goals and objectives for identifying, recruiting, and supporting low-income and minority students in their efforts to prepare for a rigorous academic curriculum at the middle and high school level. We have not compiled this information because it varies from district to district. Parental involvement goals, plans, and objectives can be found in the Consolidated Grant Applications and in the school improvement plans that all districts must complete.

We strongly recommend that presenters read the information to be better prepared to address parents' questions. The *research* preceding the actual presentations is an invaluable source of information on the cultural and linguistic differences of minority parents and students. Presenters will be able to find the answers to the questions that may be asked during the presentations as well as the practical advice that will enable them to have a better understanding of all their students.

Diversity and Cross-Cultural Communication

Learning more about ourselves and our students as members of unique ethnic, cultural, and linguistic communities is an important strategy for improving the quality of communication between teachers, students, families, and schools. Parents who are not familiar with the U.S. educational system face additional challenges in their general school involvement. For example, parents who grew up in different countries may behave in a manner consistent with the way they were expected to behave in the countries where they were raised. In some countries/cultures, parents are not expected to participate in school educational activities other than help with homework and attend occasional festivities. The U.S. school system assumes that parents will take some responsibility for their children's success in formal education by becoming actively involved with the school and helping their children. The expectation is that parents will be involved not only with homework but also with special projects and other related activities. In many countries the role of the parents and the role of the school are sharply delineated and divided. Parents have a serious duty to instill respect and proper behavior in their children. It is the school's job to instill academic knowledge. Educators might be perceived as having not only the responsibility but also the right to make all educational decisions about their students. In addition, many linguistically and/or immigrant parents are not aware of their legal rights and the different role that they can have in their respective school systems.

When the families of immigrant youths have no understanding of the educational system, they may feel that they are losing their children to the large, unknown world that their children now belong to, but parents do not. They may become confused, frightened, and frustrated. These conflicts can create a sense of despair and tension. Schools can help families in the process of transitioning into the U.S. mainstream culture by making them feel welcomed and valuable. When families understand how they can support their children's education and when schools find ways to address and incorporate these families' cultural contributions, everybody benefits.

Linguistically and culturally diverse families in general, and immigrant families in particular, need information that will help them make the most of the educational opportunities available to their children. They need to be aware of the complexities and implications of the program options within the system such as vocational education, the honors program, Advanced Placement courses, and career academics. They need to understand how placement decisions are made and by whom.

It is important to keep in mind that principals, teachers, and support staff have a strong impact on parents. A kind word or a smile can make parents feel part of the school environment and encourage them to participate. On the other hand, an unbecoming attitude or a rude remark from a staff member can shut down communication and prevent parents from participating in school activities.

Parents from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds have a wealth of information and resources to share with their children and with their schools. These parents can enhance their positive influence when the appropriate information, awareness, and motivation are provided.

Culture

Culture can be defined as a set of rules, written and unwritten, which instruct individuals on how to operate effectively with one another and with their environment. It defines not only ways to act, but also ways to react, and is therefore, an essential component of our capacity to live as human beings in a social context. Culture - as a composite of languages, values, belief systems, traditions, and rituals - provides each individual and community of like individuals with a roadmap for living. Cultural experiences form the lens through which each person views the world, his or her role, and the roles of others. Cultural experiences also shape peoples' behaviors. Culture as a body of written and unwritten rules, norms, and values is often taken for granted to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to recognize. It often appears to simply be the correct way to act. It is only when we leave our own culture that we gain the often uncomfortable awareness of other ways of behaving. Sometimes we can gain awareness of cultural differences by joining a sub-group within our own culture. For example, a working class white female may feel uncomfortable when in the company of upper-class white males.

The more we understand about our own and the culture of others and its influences on our daily interactions, the better equipped we are to mediate the cultural discontinuities that frequently arise in school and classroom settings where teachers and students often approach schooling from different cultural perspectives.

Culture is learned. People are not born with automatic knowledge of the cultural standards and practices of their families and communities; they learn it over time through interactions with family members and non-family members in their immediate and surrounding environments. Students bring these experiences with them to their schooling environments and interactions. Culture is dynamic and ever evolving. Institutions as well as people are shaped by culture.

American schools have a very definite culture that ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students and families often find difficult to understand and to accept in positive ways. Sometimes the culture of schooling and schools as institutions must undergo changes that are

more supportive in serving a diverse population. The onus of change cannot fall entirely on our diverse students and families; much of what they bring culturally to school is valuable and enriching to the learning and schooling practices for all students.

Assimilation and acculturation practices of the past are not always acceptable to today's immigrants. Many want to retain the language and cultural traditions of their families, while also learning about the mainstream culture of their new homeland. For example, while many immigrant families are striving to maintain their linguistic integrity of their homelands and heritage, they are eager to ensure that their children are successful students in America's public schools--even though the culture of schooling in America is different from the culture of schooling in their home countries. They are willing to learn about a new "culture of education" to help their children be successful, but they need the support and assistance of their children's educators to learn the new culture of education in this country and particularly the new culture of family involvement in which they are expected to participate.

Cultural Experiences and Cross-Cultural Communication

Educators in the United States today are more and more often teaching students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Students in any given school district come from many different countries and speak many different languages. Knowing how to establish positive cross-cultural communication is key in ensuring an effective and inclusive learning environment that can lead to academic success.

As Gail Nemetz (1988) indicates, the more prepared teachers are to communicate with students of diverse backgrounds, the more academic success can be achieved. In her book *Cross-Cultural Understanding,* Nemetz highlights this premise: "The more culturally diverse the teaching strategies and my own interactional style, the more students from diverse backgrounds participated, the quicker their language acquisition, and the more interaction between the class members, both inside and outside the class (2)." In order to learn how to interact effectively with students from diverse backgrounds, it is important to understand how cultural experiences influence social perception and, therefore, communication. According to Nemetz, there are several ways in which people's appearance and/or behavior and interpretation of information influence how they are perceived. These include:

- Physical cues include various aspects of physical appearance, including physique, height, facial features, and clothing. Cultural experiences influence aesthetic values of what is attractive. For example, thin lips may be a sign of beauty in one culture, thick lips in another. A slight physique may be more familiar and more positively identified in one culture, a heavy physique in another. Cultural familiarity with particular aspects of appearance influence positive affiliation. Similarly, lack of familiarity might inhibit affiliation and result in negative impressions.

- Behavioral cues include verbal cues; extra verbal cues; and non-verbal cues.

- Verbal cues refer to syntax, lexicon, and even the frequency with which certain meanings are conveyed. Familiarity with a particular lexicon influences positive perceptions.

Analogously, it would appear that the more similar someone else's language is perceived to be to one's own, the more positive the perception of the language and the user, and the reverse.

- Extra-verbal cues refer to audible signs that are part of the verbal system, such as speech intonation, stress, pitch, volume, speed, and length of speech and pause. The ways these different cues are perceived vary from culture to culture. For example, the degree of speech volume that would convey anger differs for speakers of Japanese and Italian. In one culture, loudness may be interpreted as abruptness; in another culture, softness may be interpreted as timidity.

- Non-verbal cues refer to the meaning associated with the use of time, the organization of space, and the way people move. For example, the same gesture may cue different attitudes across cultures. The act of looking down by a student while being spoken to by a Mexican teacher might cause a positive perception of the student by a teacher. In this case, looking down might signal respect, which is highly valued. The same act might engender a negative perception on the part of an Anglo American teacher. Looking down might signal inattention or guilt.

Positive perceptions among people from different cultures are thus influenced by:

(1) the degree of similarity in the cues and their meanings;
(2) the listener's knowledge of what the speaker's cues mean from the speaker's cultural perspective.

Two other aspects of cross-cultural communication that should be carefully considered are:

- Ways of structuring information. For example, Anglo-Americans generally expect speakers to come to the point. This might be contrasted with other cultures and/or ethnic groups who might start a conversation by focusing on other aspects that are relevant to getting to know the person better or making the person feel comfortable before "getting to the point." Another example of ways of structuring communication is related to conventions in expressing or avoiding disagreement. In some Asian cultures preserving "harmony" is extremely important; therefore, verbal disagreement is avoided. In other cultures disagreement is expressed directly.

- Tendency of Structuring Information. According to psychologists this is the human tendency for consistency. People tend to interpret the behavior of other people in a way that is consistent with their established frame of reference or schemes. In order to maintain consistency, people may reject, discount, or distort information that does not fit in their schemes.

As psychologist, E. Aronson, (1972) states in his book *The Social Animal*, "The deeper a person's commitment to an attitude, the greater his tendency to reject dissonant information." This tendency towards consistency can sometimes lead us to, what is called, cognitive bias. As a result, people make erroneous judgments and/or generalizations about people from backgrounds different from their own.

According to Gumperz, Jupp, and Roberts (1979), communication between people from different ethnic groups breaks down due to the following types of differences:

(1) Different cultural assumptions about the situation and about appropriate behavior and intentions within it.
(2) Different ways of structuring information or an argument in a conversation.
(3) Different ways of speaking; the use of a different set of unconscious linguistic conventions (such as tone of voice) to emphasize, to signal connections and logic; and to imply the significance of what is being said in terms of overall meaning and attitudes.

Teachers, counselors, and any other school staff need to be aware of the different communication patterns of the populations they serve in order to increase effectiveness and create a respectful and inclusive environment. Parents also need to become aware of the school's culture and ways of interacting so that they can find ways to communicate with the school and become more involved with their children's education.

Examples of Ways of Structuring Information

Example #1

Misunderstandings between Japanese and American speakers might be influenced by different ways of structuring information. The American value of directness is contrasted with the Japanese value of maintaining harmony. Japanese responses to yes/no questions may tend to be in the affirmative. For example, students who did not have their homework might respond to the question "Don't you have your homework?" or "You don't have your homework, do you?" with "Yes." "Yes" would indicate that the listener is in agreement with the speaker's statement, i.e., "Yes, I agree with you. I don't have my homework." A direct question is rarely answered with a simple "No." Japanese speakers structure arguments to avoid direct refusal and confrontation. To a Japanese speaker who is expecting similar forms of arguments, the directness of American conversation might appear offensive. An American, on the other hand, often becomes annoyed at what appears to be a confusing rhetoric, "unnecessary beating around the bushes."

Questions:

1. As an educator, what suggestions would you make to improve the communication between the American and Japanese speaker mentioned in the example?

2. How would you use the information highlighted in this example to improve your communication with parents of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds?

Source: Gail Nemetz (1988), *Cross Cultural Understanding*. Prentice Hall, New York.

Example # 2

In the cross-cultural training film *Take Two* (IRI, 1982) non-reciprocity of speech initiation and content is illustrated between an American student and a Vietnamese student. An American student is seen trying to befriend a Vietnamese student. In an attempt to keep the conversation going, the American continually asks questions; the Vietnamese responds, often with "Yes" or "No," or with a very short answer, without elaboration. After this conversation filmed in *Take One*, each student is interviewed. The American student felt the Vietnamese student was not interested in her, because she never asked the American student any question in return. The Vietnamese student, on the other hand, felt the American student kept "firing" questions at her, without giving her enough time to respond. (For the American student, any pause after the student's response was uncomfortable). She was also not accustomed to the American style of elaborating and then asking more questions back. After intervention training, more effective communication occurs in *Take Two*, in which the American student pauses after each question and does not jump in with another question until the Vietnamese student has had ample chance to reply. The Vietnamese student has also learned to ask questions back to the American student.

Questions:

1. How does the tendency for consistency influence the interaction between the two students?

2. As an educator, how would you use the information highlighted in this example to improve your communication with parents of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds?

Source: *Gail Nemetz (1988), Cross Cultural Understanding*. Prentice Hall, New York.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Communication with Latino Families and Communities

The Latino population in the United States is characterized by its diversity. Latinos may differ by country of origin, socio-economic status, and educational level, as well as by specific cultural traits. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Latino population comprises approximately 35 million or 12.4 percent of the U.S. population.

- Historical roots: Latinos today include groups of people who have been living in this country since the seventeenth century and Latinos who have migrated from their native countries. Although a large percentage of Latinos are recent immigrants, a considerable number are descendents of settlers born in areas such as California and New Mexico when they were part of the Spanish colonies.

- Demographics: Latinos are one of the fastest growing groups in this country. They account for 40 percent of the country's population growth between 1990 and 2000. According to Census projections, Latinos will represent 25 percent of the population in 2050 and could reach to 33.3 percent by 2100. Latinos also have a younger median age. The median age for Latinos is now 26.4 years or nine years younger than the median for the U.S. as a whole. The largest number of foreign-born Latinos comes from Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador.

- A common language: A major unifying factor for Latinos is their use of the Spanish language. Most people of Latino ancestry speak a variation of the Spanish language with the exception of Brazilians who speak Portuguese. While minor variations may be found in different Latino groups (idioms, pronunciation, and accents), all Latinos can communicate effectively in Spanish. For example, the Spanish spoken in Miami differs somewhat from the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles. Similarly, Spanish spoken by a Peruvian person differs somewhat from the Spanish spoken by an Argentinean person. Many second and third generation Latinos no longer speak Spanish fluently creating intergenerational communication difficulties within the families.

- Differences within Latino groups: Given the diversity found in the Latino population, it is difficult to find characteristics that apply to all of them. Being foreign born or native born, regional differences, acculturation stages, socio-economic background, educational level, religion, and other characteristics all produce a variation that determine different values, styles, and preferences (Zuñiga, 1998).

- Socio-economic and educational differences: While some Latinos come from highly educated and sophisticated urban backgrounds, others come from isolated rural areas with limited access to formal education. Therefore, tremendous variations are found in the educational background of the foreign born -- ranging from highly trained professionals to illiterate people -- even with the same national and ethnic subgroup (Osterling, 2001).

- Class differences and attitudes towards world view: Class variations within Latino groups for example can determine different behaviors, values, and world-view. Abalos (1986) questioned whether the "passiveness or fatalism" often ascribed to Latinos in general is more specifically related to the socio-economic group. People who are poor or minimally educated may have a limited sense of options. They may have few experiences with self-empowerment as a result of the economic constraints they endure. In this particular case, "passiveness or fatalism" would be more the effect of living in harsh conditions as opposed to ethnic affiliation. According to Montijo (1985), an immigrant Mexican family from a middle-class milieu in Mexico City may be more similar in its attitudes towards life to U.S. middle-class families than a U.S. born Mexican family of low-socioeconomic status.

In spite of the enormous differences found in Latinos, there are certain traits in the non-verbal and verbal communication patterns that might help educators communicate more effectively with Latino parents of diverse backgrounds.

Examples of non-verbal and verbal Latino communication style include the following:

Non-Verbal Communication Styles

- Touch people with whom they are speaking
- Sit and stand closer than other cultural groups
- Interpret prolonged eye contact as disrespectful

Verbal Communication Styles

- Informal conversations are commonly initiated before discussing personal issues
- Directness is not always positively valued
- Interrupting other speakers is sometimes used as a way of showing understanding

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The following scenario highlights some of the communication styles between a teacher and a Latino parent. Questions at the end of the scenario help reflect on ways of improving communication.

Scenario # 1 - Latino Student

Ms. Walker, a fourth grade teacher, is concerned about the academic achievement of one of her Latino students, José Flores. The teacher decides to call the Flores family to share her concerns and to develop a plan to help Jose improve his achievement.

Ms. Walker calls the Flores family on the phone several times, at different hours, but she is not able to communicate with any member of the Flores family. Finally, she decides to send a note with José in order to schedule a meeting. Since José's parents do not speak English very well, José has to translate the note.

The mother, Ms. Lucinda Flores, asks José to write a note back with a given date and time. Ms. Walker gets the note and the meeting is arranged. Ms. Flores and Ms. Walker finally meet.

Ms. Walker shakes hands with Ms. Flores and almost immediately explains the reasons why she is concerned about Jose's achievement. Ms. Flores shows signs of embarrassment and concern. She wants to know if José is "bien educado" (behaves well in school). Ms. Flores indicates that she tries to teach her children to always behave and be respectful at school. She emphasizes the fact that she has asked José and her other children to do what the teacher says. She does not understand why José is not doing well.

Ms. Walker becomes irritated because she is not concerned with Jose's behavior. She is concerned about his achievement. She explains that to Ms. Flores in a straightforward way. "Ms. Flores, José behaves well, that is not the problem. The problem is that he is not doing well in math and reading. We have to find ways to help him at school and at home."

Ms. Flores gets a little closer to Ms. Walker and says: "I am so sorry, Ms. Walker, I have tried to teach José to do what you say." Ms. Walker feels uncomfortable with the physical proximity and moves back from her current position. She wants to conclude the meeting quickly because she feels uncomfortable and does not feel that the communication is going well. Ms. Flores is still trying to recover from her feelings of embarrassment.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Communication with African American Families

As with any cultural group, African Americans have as many characteristics that distinguish them from each other as they have characteristics that distinguish them from mainstream culture. African Americans differ from each other in many ways; these differences include, but are not limited to:

- Geographic and historical roots
  African Americans come from a wide variety of geographic locations both within the United States and from their country of origin. Not all African Americans were slaves. Some came to the New World as free men and they and their ancestors remained free throughout the period of slavery. Two million slaves were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation. They had been taken from a wide variety of African nations and tribes. Since the end of slavery, Black immigrants have come from a variety of places from Ethiopia to the Caribbean. These immigrants and their families have norms and values that differ from African Americans. Within the colonies that became the United States, free Black men who settled in the North became farmers, servants, white-collar workers, or entrepreneurs. Freed slaves in the South were likely to become sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Between 1920 and 1970 southern Blacks left the South in large numbers in search of better jobs in the North.

- Language
  Almost all African American people can speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and many do so regularly, especially in African American urban and rural communities. The roots of AAVE are believed by linguists to be in the languages of Western and Central Africa. Although often referred to as a "non-language" or a dialect, linguists agree because research has shown AAVE to be rule-governed, it is a true language in its own right. AAVE differs from standard American English (SAE) in its grammar, noticeably in its use of verbs, the formation of plurals, and the level of ambiguity (or double entendre). Developed by slaves forced to speak English by slave owners, AAVE uses an English Vocabulary (lexicon) built on the grammatical rules (syntax) of the Niger-Congo languages of Africa. For many African American children, AAVE is their first language and the primary language used in their homes and communities. Middle and higher socio-economic

status African Americans generally speak standard English when interacting in the mainstream educational, professional, and non-familial social situations with regional variations.

- Color and attitudes toward color
  During slavery, lighter skin Blacks were favored. These Blacks were often the result of a union between the master and a slave and they tended to work in the house rather than in the field and were more likely to be given their freedom. For many years, many African Americans preferred those with lighter skin and "good hair." Traditional Black colleges were once known to admit a majority of students who had light skin. In the sixties, those who had lighter skin were seen by some as closer to the enemy while darker skin and afros were favored. Since the sixties, there has been much discussion in the African American community about attitudes toward skin color and hair texture.

- Religious affiliation and strengths of those affiliations
  Today, African Americans are represented among virtually every religion practiced in the United States and their strength of affiliation varies widely. After slavery, a growing number of African Americans joined Black Methodist and Baptist churches that had evangelical roots and used spiritual songs and gospel. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) sent missionaries to the South immediately after the war and greatly increased membership.

- Education and attitude toward education
  Slaves could be hung for learning to read and write. The pursuit of literacy and learning became not only a tool to gain freedom but also a symbol of one's full status as a human being. Education in the African American community was equated to the social identity of a free person. To read and write was to lift up the race. African American narratives record the willingness of elders to do whatever needed to be done in order to provide education for their children. Later, doing well in school and getting an education became synonymous with proving one's worth as a human being and helping the race. When and how did achieving in school become a white thing? Integration brought white Americans face to face with stereotypes and prejudice that were reinforced by the sometimes-inferior education of the African American students who came into white schools. The result was that African American students were placed in special education and less challenging classes. For the most part, the richness of African American culture was not included in the curriculum. It is not surprising that in these conditions, high performance in a predominately white school using a white curriculum was seen by some as an exclusively white domain.

- Social class and class differences
  African American norms, like the norms of other groups, differ by social class. However, unlike some other groups there is more mixing between classes because it is not uncommon for an extended family to have members in more than one social class.

- Family structure and organization
  The African American family has the strength that comes from an extended family whose roots probably go back to African tribal kinship. All elders feel responsible for the children, and children are expected to respect all of their elders. Aunts and uncles are not confined to blood relatives, with friends often playing the role of supportive adults. Single parent households are common with more then one generation sharing housing and parental responsibility.

- Gender
  Like all groups there are distinctions between gender roles. Both African American men and women tend to be strong, competent, and socially expressive. The fact that African American women are frequently seen, by members of other groups, in a more favorable light than African American men has created many problems. In almost all statistical summaries of education and employment, African American women are doing better than African American men.

What follows are examples of commonly found non-verbal and verbal communication styles of African Americans.

Non-Verbal Communication Styles

- Listeners are expected to avert eyes to indicate respect and attention.

- Speakers are expected to look at listeners directly in the eye.

- Showing emotion during conflict is perceived as honesty and as the first step towards the resolution of a problem.

- Touching another's hair is generally considered offensive.

- Hats and sunglasses may be considered by men as adornments much like jewelry and may be worn indoors.

- Confederate flags are considered offensive and racist.

Source: Taylor, O. Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education. Washington, DC: The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, 1987.

Verbal Communication Styles

- Asking personal questions of a person met for the first time may be seen as improper and intrusive.

- Using direct questions is sometimes considered harassment.

- Breaking in during a conversation by participants is usually tolerated.

- Competing for the floor is granted to the person who is most assertive.

- Conversations are regarded as private between the recognized participants; butting in may be seen as eavesdropping and not tolerated.

Source: Taylor, O. Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education. Washington, DC: The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, 1987.

Scenario III -- African American Students

Aisha is not doing well in her math class. The teacher has been attempting to meet with Aisha's mother for weeks because she is concerned about Aisha's performance in her math class and is upset by what she sees as a lack of effort on Aisha's part and a lack of concern on the part of her mother.

The teacher is finally able to schedule a meeting with Aisha's mother by calling her late at night before she goes to bed. The teacher realized that Aisha's mother must work very late and what she has seen as a lack of concern is probably just her long hours.

When they meet, the teacher is careful to not waist the time of Aisha's mother and goes directly to the problem at hand. She explains that Aisha is not doing well in math class and that the more she tries to inform Aisha of her academic problems the more she seems to develop an attitude.

Aisha's mother avoids looking at the teacher directly in the eye while she is talking. The teacher feels that she is not being respectful but says nothing about it. When the teacher presents the problem, Aisha's mother becomes very agitated and almost angry at her daughter, the teacher, and the situation. By the end of the meeting, the teacher feels almost insulted and not appreciated and did not know how to continue the conversation.

Questions for reflection:

In this scenario verbal and non-verbal communication styles are influencing the communications between the teacher and Aisha's mother.

1. What are some of the communication patterns between teacher and mother that created tension?
2. What can the teacher do to improve the communication with the mother?

Principles for Cross-Cultural Communication

Educators can significantly improve the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication with students or their families if they observe the following rules:

- Demonstrate respect for individuals from other cultures;

- Make continued and sincere attempts to understand the world from others' points of view. Pay attention to non-verbal communication clues such as body language (positions and postures, gestures, eye contact and facial expressions, and proximity (social distance) zones and touching;

- Are open to new learning and constantly search for new strategies to improve cross-cultural communication;

- Are flexible;

- Have a sense of humor;

- Tolerate ambiguity well;

- Approach others with a desire to learn;

- Exhibit a willingness to bring their own communication style into synchrony with whom they are trying to communicate;

- Seek out skilled cultural and linguistics mediators--individuals often from the same cultural and language backgrounds of the students and families they are trying to effectively communicate with. These mediators can serve as cultural and linguistics interpreters.

Exploring the Linguistic Backgrounds of Students

The following questions can help educators know and understand students from different language backgrounds:

1. Where does the student come from? If the student is a recent immigrant, what social/political conditions in his/her native country prompted their immigration?

2. What is his/her native language? What language is used at home? How fluent is he/she in the use of his/her native language? What is the level of literacy in the native language? What do I know about their native language?

3. What language does the student use to communicate with his/her family and the immediate communities?

4. How does the student feel about his/her status as English language learner?

5. How well am I able to communicate with my English learning students?

6. What level of schooling did the student complete in his/her native country?

7. Is the level of fluency and literacy in English adequate to master subject matter material?

8. Do I encourage the student to use his/her native language in the classroom and in learning activities? Why or why not?

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SECTION II

Unit 1

The Benefits of Parental Involvement

Purpose:

The main purpose of Unit 1 is to provide families with general information on the benefits of family involvement in children's learning. In this unit, parents will learn about the positive impact of parental involvement in students' academic achievement. Participants will also learn ways to increase school-parent communication in order to maximize students learning.

Activities:

1. **Parents, a Key Component for Educational Success**
2. **Ten Minutes Can Make a Difference in Your Child's Life**

Background Information for the Trainer:

Research shows that parents play an important role in their children's education. Schools are particularly interested in these findings since there is compelling evidence that family involvement has positive effects on children's academic achievement (Epstein, 1991; Griffith, Wade, & Loeb, 1997; Shaefer, 1972; Walberg, 1984).

Evidence also indicates that family practices concerning children's education are more important for helping students succeed in school, than are family structure, economic status, or characteristics such as race, parent education, family size, and age of child. According to these studies, children tend to do well in school when their parents express high expectations for school achievement; stress the value of schooling; conduct warm, nurturing and frequent interactions with their children; and encourage a purposeful use of time and space (Chavkin, 1989; Clark, 1983; Schiamberg & Chun, 1986).

In a longitudinal study of seven Chicano families in Southern California, Villanueva (1996) found that Latino families were able to have a positive impact on their children's education in spite of a lack of formal schooling, limited knowledge of English, and lack of skills to help their children with homework. She found that despite these limitations, families motivated their children to do well in school by providing them with cultural practices that foster a positive attitude towards work and a sense of responsibility and a deep respect for education.

The following additional benefits are found in research on parental involvement:

- Increased achievement of second language acquisition (Bermudez & Padron, 1989; Henderson & Garcia, 1973);
- Improved overall school behavior (Levenstein, 1974; Weikhart, 1973);
- Improved parent-child relationships (Henderson, 1988);
- Improved home-school relationships (Bermudez & Padron, 1987; Oakes, 1990; Herman & Yeh, 1980); and
- Decreased drop out rates (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Nuñez, 1994).

Additionally, it has been documented that meaningful parent participation results in benefits to parents and children that extend beyond the individual school. Parents who participate in joint efforts with schools develop increased self-confidence, have more positive attitudes towards school and staff, help gather support in the community for their schools, and enroll in other educational programs (Becher, 1984; Chavkin, 1989; Cummins, 1986; Basterra, 2000).

Activity 1
Parents, a Key Component for Educational Success

Goal Activity 1:

To provide parents with information about the positive impact of parental involvement.

Approximate time required: 1 hour and a half

Materials: Markers and flip chart.
Transparency Number 1: ***When Parents Get Involved in Their Children's Education***.

Procedure:

1.   **Warm-up Activity** (15 minutes): Before starting the activity explain the general purpose of this session. Then have each parent introduce himself/herself and talk briefly about his or her view of the importance of education in their children's lives.

2.   **Whole Group Activity:** Present transparency number 1 (15 minutes). Briefly explain the importance of parent involvement and the ways in which they can positively impact their children's education.

3.   **Small Group Activity # 1** (30 minutes): Have parents participate in the following exercise. Divide the parents in small groups of four or five. Ask parents to think of ways in which they can help their children do well in school. Encourage them to provide examples of strategies they currently use to help their own children. Have the group select a recorder and a presenter. Have each group list their own strategies on a flip chart. Make sure that parents feel comfortable with these roles. If needed, you and/or a school representative might need to help them record/present their ideas.

4.   **Small Group Activity # 2** (30 minutes): As a follow-up activity, ask parents to go back to their original list and rank their strategies in terms of their effectiveness. "Which of these strategies has been most successful?" Have the group re-write the strategies in rank order. Once this activity is completed, have different groups share their strategies. It is important to allow the parents to provide their own rankings. There are no right and wrong responses.

If parents speak different languages, try to have parents who speak the same language in the same group to enable them to communicate in their native language if they wish to do so. In addition, it is important to have interpreters to help members of the group communicate with each other if some members of the group are not English proficient.

Activity 2
Ten Minutes Can Make a Difference in your Child's Life!

Goal of Activity 2:

To emphasize the power that parents may have in their children's academic lives when they get involved.

Approximate Time Required: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials: Flip chart, markers
Transparency # 2: ***Ten Minutes Can Make a Difference in Your Child's Life***
Transparency # 3: ***Have You Been in a Similar Situation****?*

Procedure:

1. **Whole Group Activity,** Present Transparency #2 (15 minutes): You can read it aloud or you may have one of the parents read it to the group.

3. **Whole Group Discussion** (20 minutes): Facilitate a discussion among parents. Present transparency #3 and facilitate discussion on the questions: "Have you experienced a similar situation? What did you do? What was the result of your action?" Write parents' responses on the flip chart.

4. **Small Group Activity** (40 minutes): Divide the group into small groups. Ask each group to discuss the following question:
    a. What kind of information and/or resources from the school would you need to become a better advocate for your child? Have the group write their ideas on a separate piece of paper.

5. **Large Group Activity (**15 minutes): Small groups share their findings with the entire group.

Unit I
Activity # 2 At-a-Glance
Parents: A Key Component for Educational Success

Step	Time Allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Warm-up activity	15 minutes	None	Overview of activity and general introductions	Parents get to know other members of the group
Presentation of transparency #1	15 minutes	Transparency # 1: *When parents are involved in their children's education*	Presenter shares research findings on parental involvement	Parents become aware of the positive impact of parental involvement
Small group activity #1	45 minutes	Flip chart, markers	Parents identify ways in which parents can help children do well in school	Parents use research findings as a departing point to think of ways in which they can help their children in school
Small group activity #2	30 minutes	Flip chart, markers	Parents prioritize parental involvement activities according to degree of effectiveness	Parents reflect on the most effective ways to be involved in their children's education

Unit I
Activity # 2 At-a-Glance
Ten Minutes Can Make a Difference in your Child's Life!

Step	Time Allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Presentation of Transparency #2	15 minutes	Transparency #2: *Ten minutes can make a difference in your child's life!*	Parents are introduced to a parent's testimony on the importance of getting involved	Parents become familiar with a specific sample of the benefits of parental involvement from a parent's perspective
Group discussion	20 minutes	Transparency #3: *Have you been in a similar situation?* Flip chart, markers	Parents share and discuss similar situations in which they were personally involved	Parents are able to share similar experiences with the group
Small group activity	40 minutes	Flip chart, markers	Parents identify the types of information and/or resources needed to become better advocates for their children	Parents become aware of their specific needs and/or resources needed in order to become better advocates for their children
Large group activity	15 minutes	Form A, flip chart	Parents report their ideas to the larger group	Parents develop summaries of discussed ideas

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Unit II

Overcoming Traditional Barriers that Prevent Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents from Helping their Children to Enroll in Advanced Placement Programs

Purpose:

The main purpose of Unit II is to provide information for educators and families on strategies for overcoming traditional barriers that prevent ethnic, cultural and linguistically diverse students from participating in Advanced Placement programs (AP).

Activity

1. **Building Bridges, Understanding and Addressing Parents' Concerns**
   Background Information: As we learned in Unit I, several studies show that parental involvement is critical in helping students succeed in school. Evidence also indicates that when schools develop programs and partnerships to involve families, parents appreciate the assistance, families become more involved, and students improve their achievement, attitudes, and behaviors (Davies, 1990; Swapp, 1993; Griffith et al, 1997).

   The questions that now need to be asked are: If family involvement is so important, how can schools help all families to become involved in ways that help their children succeed in school? How can we encourage more parents to help their children participate in Advanced Placement courses? In order to answer these questions, we must first become aware of the barriers that many linguistically and culturally diverse parents face in order to become active participants in schools and in the education of their children.

**Barriers That Inhibit the Participation of Linguistically and
Culturally Diverse Families**

Research shows that several barriers affect the participation of linguistically and culturally diverse families. These include:

1. **Work interference**. Most of these parents work full time and many of them have two jobs (during the day and at night).

2. **Lack of English language skills**. Parents whose English proficiency is limited may find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff, to help in school activities, and/or to participate in PTAs or other parent organizations that conduct their activities in English.

3. **Lack of confidence interacting in a culture different from their own**. Many of these parents, including a significant number of African American families, do not feel comfortable in what we know as a "standard American school" environment. The culture of the typical American school is, in many cases, very different from either the schools in the immigrant students' home countries and/or their neighborhood and cultural backgrounds.

4. **Insufficient information on school related topics**. Immigrant families may not be aware of the way American schools operate. They don't know what resources are available or what kind of courses or programs their children need to take in order to achieve academic success and prepare for college. African American parents, while more familiar with the system, might not know or be aware of specific courses needed to apply to college or the importance of participating in advance placement courses.

5. **Negative interactions with some member of the school staff**. Parents from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds have frequently reported not being treated respectfully by reception area staff, counselors, and even teachers. Feelings of discrimination and/or not being welcomed are often shared by these parents (Basterra, 2000; Bermudez, 1993).

6. **Transportation and child care**. While most parents have problems finding time and transportation to attend parental involvement activities at school, this problem is more acute for low-income immigrant and African American parents. Not having the means to pay for a babysitter and/or lack of transportation is at the heart of this barrier.

Parents are not the only ones to face barriers. Educators also confront barriers in their interaction with parents. Teachers and administrators have cited the following barriers to effective communication with parents:

1. **Lack of formal training in dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse populations**. Until recently, institutes of higher education and school districts did not offer any training on diversity. Changes in demographics and the need to include all children in school reform efforts are changing this trend. Without appropriate training, educators cannot effectively address the needs of their growing diverse populations.

2. **Lack of confidence interacting with people from a culture different from their own**. Educators who do not have the opportunity to have positive experiences and/or to learn about different cultures may find it difficult to interact with families from diverse cultural groups. Teachers need to become aware of ways to communicate effectively with parents from diverse backgrounds. In order to communicate effectively, it is important to become aware of the different behaviors and/or ways of interacting with different cultures that are present in the schools. This understanding will enable educators to find ways in which to promote active and enriching experiences for educators and parents.

3. **Not being able to communicate in students' home languages**. Educators, who do not understand the different home language of the families they serve, might find it difficult to communicate with these groups of parents. Lack of communication may sometimes cause negative feelings and perceptions. Some educators might feel that when parents speak their language they are not making an effort to assimilate to American society. Other times, they may think that variations of English or other languages spoken at home impede the effectiveness of their work.

4. **Lack of accurate knowledge about different cultures.** Many teachers have expressed the need to learn about different cultural beliefs, lifestyles, and overall cultural backgrounds of their students. Lack of accurate knowledge leads to stereotypes. Stereotypical views about low-income, culturally diverse parents have a negative impact on the relationships between teachers and families. Some educators believe that low-income, linguistically and culturally diverse parents do not care about the education of their children and/or cannot make intelligent decisions regarding their children's education. Based on these stereotypes, some educators develop lower expectations for their students and their families. These are some examples of common stereotypes: Latino parents refuse to speak English with their children because they don't want to be part of American society. African American fathers don't spend time with their children.

According to Villarreal (1990), there are also additional structural reasons why many parents from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds do not participate in many of the traditional parental involvement activities offered by schools. Villarreal highlights the following structural barriers as critical in impeding the participation of these parents:

> **Lack of parents' ownership of school initiatives.** Parents don't usually participate in determining those activities in which they prefer to be involved. In many cases, parents are not involved in the planning phase of parent involvement projects, which results in a lack of ownership.
> **Mistrust.** Mistrust results from the uncertainty and the lack of confidence that exists between school personnel and parents.
> **Superficial involvement.** This lack of involvement results from one-way communication with parents. Parents are told what to do and are merely informed of what is happening in school and how their children are progressing.

In order to develop an effective partnership with parents, schools need to find ways to overcome all the above-mentioned barriers. The following activities will help both educators and parents find ways to circumvent these obstacles and develop activities that will enable parents and educators to foster the participation of students in Advanced Placement courses.

Activity 1

Building Bridges: Understanding and Addressing Parents' Concerns

Goals of the activity:

To identify perceived barriers faced by parents and to find potential solutions to address the identified barriers.

Approximate time required: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials: Flip chart, markers
             Handout A: Identifying barriers and finding solutions

Procedure:

1.   **Introduction and warm-up activity (15 minutes)**. Describe the main purpose of the session. **Whole group lecture (25 minutes)**. Explain to audience that the school district is trying to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's education. One of the main goals of this effort is to increase the number of linguistically and culturally diverse students that participate in Advanced Placement courses. Mention that in order to reach this goal, the school district needs to know if there would be any barriers and/or obstacles that would make it difficult for parents to participate in the process that they are trying to develop between parents and schools. Ask parents about some of the barriers they may face when they try to become involved with the schools. Invite parents to volunteer a couple of examples. Acknowledge how the examples offered affect participation. Ask if these are common barriers for families.

3.   **Small group activity (30 minutes):** Ask the parents to work in small groups. Give parents a copy of Form A: *Identifying barriers and finding solutions.* Present parents with a copy of the form using the appropriate transparency. Instruct the group on how to complete the form. In the left hand column they need to identify the barriers. In the right hand column, they need to provide possible solutions that the school and/or the parents can work on. Provide examples for each column.

      Then, ask each group to proceed with the task. Each group will need to select a recorder to complete the form and a presenter to share their forms with the whole group.

4.   **Whole group activity (20 minutes):** Have each group present their forms. Allow approximately five minutes per group.   After each presentation, encourage parents of each group to provide ideas on how to best accomplish the solutions they have identified. *Note for the presenter: A selected list of barriers and potential solutions is included at the end of this activity. It can be used as additional information and/or to elicit responses from the parents.*

Activity # 1 At-a-Glance

Building Bridges: Understanding and Addressing Parents' Concerns

Step	Time Allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Introduction and warm-up activity	15 minutes	None	Overview of activity and general introductions	Parents get to know the main purpose of the activity
Whole group lecture	25 minutes	None	Presenter shares school district's plans to involve parents.	Parents become aware of the school district plans.
Small group activity	30 minutes	Form A: Identifying barriers, finding solutions	Parents identify potential barriers and come up with solutions to address barriers	Parents become active participants of the process
Whole group activity	20 minutes	Completed A Forms, flip chart, markers	Parents share their ideas with the group	Parents learn new ways to improve process by listening to other groups

Handout A
Identifying Barriers and Finding Solutions

Barriers	Solutions

Presenter's Handout B
Identifying Barriers and Finding Solutions

Barriers	Solutions
Work schedules that prevent parents from attending workshops and/or participating in related AP activities planned to help them advocate for their children	-Conduct a survey to find out the most convenient times to hold activities -Select the most convenient schedules (usually evenings and/or weekends)
Lack of English language skills	-Have interpreters available -Encourage parents to bring a bilingual relative or friend -Sensitize school personnel to linguistic and culturally diverse families
Lack of confidence interacting in a culture different from their own	-Conduct meetings and mentoring by native speakers -Make them feel that they are contributing, not only to their children's success, but also to the culture of the school -Integrate parents' cultural backgrounds in all school related activities
Insufficient information on Advanced Placement courses and their impact on their children's future academic and job success	-Provide specific information about Advanced Placement in a language they can understand
Insufficient information about specific actions and/or knowledge needed to help children enroll in Advanced Placement courses	-Provide parents with a handbook on the steps needed to ensure their children have access to Advanced Placement courses
Negative interactions with some members of the school staff	Welcome parents by conveying a positive attitude when they visit the school and/or when they participate in project activities -Let parents know you appreciate their presence and the time they are devoting to the school
Transportation and child care	-Hold meetings in community centers close to parents' home -Cover transportation expenses -Provide child care -Utilize extended family members or teenage siblings to provide child care at the meeting site

Panfleto A
Identificando Barreras y Encontrando Soluciones

Barreras	Soluciones

Panfleto B del Presentador
Identificando Barreras y Encontrando Soluciones

Barreras	Soluciones
Horarios de trabajo que impiden que los padres asistan a los talleres y/o que participen en actividades relacionadas con AP para ayudarles a abogar por sus hijos	-Conducir una encuesta para buscar las horas más convenientes para estas actividades -Escoger los horarios más convenientes (por lo general, las noches y/o los fines de semana).
Falta de destreza en el idioma Inglés	-Disponer de intérpretes -Animar a los padres a que traigan un pariente bilingüe o un amigo bilingüe a los talleres y/o reuniones -Asegurarse de que el personal escolar sea sensible a familias de diversas etnias culturales y lingüísticas.
Falta de confianza para participar en una cultura distinta a la suya	-Conducir reuniones y consejería con hablantes nativos de los diferentes idiomas -Hacerles saber a los padres que ellos contribuyen no sólo al éxito de sus hijos sino a la cultura de la escuela también -Integrar los aportes culturales de los padres en las actividades relacionadas con la escuela.
Información insuficiente sobre cursos de Advanced Placement y su impacto en el futuro éxito académico y laboral de sus hijos	-Proveer información específica acerca de Advanced Placement en un idioma que los padres puedan entender.
Información insuficiente sobre las acciones específicas y/o el conocimiento necesario para ayudar a que los hijos se matriculen en cursos de Advanced Placement	-Proveer a los padres con una guía escrita sobre los pasos necesarios a seguir para asegurarse que los hijos tengan acceso a cursos de Advanced Placement.
Interacciones negativas con algunos miembros del personal de la escuela	-Acoger a los padres comunicándoles una actitud positiva cuando visitan la escuela y/o participan en actividades y/o proyectos. -Hacer saber a los padres que su presencia y el tiempo que dedican a la escuela son apreciados.
Transporte y el cuidado de niños	-Reunirse en centros comunitarios cerca de las casas de los padres -Pagar los gastos del transporte -Facilitarles el cuidado de niños -Utilizar miembros de la familia extendida o hermanos adolescentes para facilitar el cuidado de niños en los centros de la reunión.

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Unit III

Advanced Placement: The Road to Success

Purpose:

The purpose of Unit III is to inform parents about the demands of the job market on young graduates and the facts about the Advanced Placement program (AP) and its impact on students' access to college, completion of a degree, and successful career. Parents will also learn the importance of supporting and motivating their children at an early age to pursue a rigorous academic curriculum in order to succeed in the AP program at the high school level and gain college credit by taking AP tests.

Activities:

1.   The Changing Landscape. Statistical data of the workplace demands on young graduates.
2.   Information and facts about pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement Programs.
3.   Research based guidelines for parental support.

Background Information for the Trainer:

The College Board's Advanced Placement program was founded in 1955 to provide high school students with an opportunity to take on the challenges of college level work while still in high school. For almost half a century, students have enrolled in AP courses and taken rigorous end of the course AP examinations to demonstrate their achievement. The high academic standards of this program introduce students to a college curriculum and allow them to earn college level credit while still in high school. AP improves students' skills for succeeding in college and confidence in their ability to succeed. Such experiences are valuable for any student planning to attend college. They are even more important for students without family experience of college attendance and often influenced by peer groups who do not consider education a promising option for the future.

AP program offers many benefits, not only to students, but also to educators. Students completing AP courses are better prepared for the rigors of college course work. They also have opportunities to accelerate their academic careers by earning college credits based on successful grades on the AP exams. Teachers also benefit from AP. They are energized by the opportunity to teach rigorous college-level courses. Their participation in AP professional development strengthens their content knowledge and pedagogical skills. School administrators also see that a commitment to AP could have a positive impact on the entire school curriculum. The goal of preparing students for AP classes demands an increase in rigor in the courses that precede AP in a student's high school experience. Consequently, strong AP programs can upgrade programs throughout the school, raising the bar for all students, not only for those who are ready for AP. In this context, students from a diverse array of schools and from different socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds can benefit from participation in AP and succeed on AP examinations. As a result, the achievement gap between traditional Advanced Placement students and underserved minorities and low-income students is narrowed and eventually closed.

To reach students from socioeconomic and minority groups that have traditionally been underserved, policy makers and supporters of education reform have been strong advocates for

the growth of AP programs. They view AP as a way to improve the quality of American education and to provide opportunities for all students. Former Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, put forth the goal of offering AP in every school in the nation, with ten courses in each school by 2010. The federal Advanced Placement Incentive (API) program provides funding for forty-one states to support access to AP for low-income students. Finally, many states have established legislative support for AP ranging from mandating AP courses in every high school, supporting teacher professional development, and subsidizing AP examination fees. The API program has been implemented in Delaware since 2001.

Parental support is one of the key factors that will enable traditionally underserved students to succeed when they attend rigorous academic classes. McCall (1999) provides a helpful review of research and writings on motivational strategies to use with underachieving students. These students are generally lacking or concealing motivations to be academically successful because of the barriers they encounter during their formative years, such as racial prejudice, poverty, broken homes, crime, teen pregnancy, and illiteracy. Although underachieving students can be of any race or class, many are from minority groups and/or low-income families. Also, many are raised in households in which the parents have not been to college or perhaps not even to high school. Thus, instead of emphasizing the value of education, these parents might encourage their children to get a job and help support the family. Students in minority groups traditionally underrepresented in college frequently experience one or more of these barriers to college education. Minority students who are not educationally or economically disadvantaged may also encounter stereotyped expectations and treatment, which are themselves barriers. Another barrier is peer pressure, which profoundly influences the academic behavior of students. Some students' cultures actively reject academic aspirations. (Tomlison, 1992. Ford, 1996, McWhorter, 2001).

To overcome these barriers, these students need the intervention of concerned educators working in close partnerships with families to establish academic goals. The impact of educators is of critical importance in discovering and encouraging academically talented minority and low income students. These students lack a family academic tradition and may be very late in discovering their academic talent. The thought of taking an AP course may not even enter their minds. Educators' commitment should focus on early intervention at the middle school level. A curriculum sequence that requires rigor is essential at an early age to introduce the options available through AP and a college education.

A review of successful programs indicates that the commitment of dedicated teachers has always been accompanied by strong parental support and cooperation. The Jaime Escalante math program for high school Advanced Placement Calculus students (Escalante, 1999), for example, emphasized high expectation and hard work, a group spirit, strong parent support, and a very high degree of commitment on the part of the teacher and the students. Escalante also engaged in relentless recruiting to bring minority students (and their parents) into the AP class. The Kay-Toliver mathematics program for junior high students (Toliver, 1993) was also centered on a caring teacher who held high expectations. Toliver blended history, culture literature, writing, and other subjects with the study of mathematics. Student progress was consistently monitored and communicated. Like Escalante, Toliver relied on parental involvement to the extent of developing lesson plans that required the attendance of students' families.

AP's growth, while impressive, poses significant challenges for the future, particularly in key areas of equity and quality. Minority participation has increased, but students from urban, rural, and poor areas are still underrepresented. Broadening equitable access to AP while maintaining and improving the quality of the program can create competing pressures. Intense pressure to

provide AP in all schools on a fast track can lead to rushed AP courses in high schools without first constructing a systemic support needed for successful AP programs. Key components of this support are administrators' leadership, professional development for counselors and teachers, adequate student preparation, and cooperation with parents. Only within this systemic implementation can students come to AP with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

Activity 1
The Job Market: A Changing Landscape

Goal of Activity 1:

The goal of Activity 1 is to inform parents about the demographic changes, the demands of the job market on young graduates, and the value and importance of a secondary education.

Background Information for the Trainer

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, rapid demographic changes are taking place in the composition of America's school age population with an ever-increasing number of minorities in our classrooms. Data released by the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics project that by the year 2008, 70 percent of the jobs will require an education beyond high school. The future of our country depends in large part on the success of our complex and diverse educational systems. Decisions made and directions pursued today will impact generations of students. Educational leaders must, therefore, make the bold choices that will guarantee all students' access to high quality education and establish a systemic program of equity and access for all students.

Approximate time required: One hour

Materials needed: Overhead projector, notepad or flipchart, markers.
Handout #1 *Is a College Education Important*
Transparencies: *#1 College Pays Off: Median annual Earnings*
#2 College Pays Off: Median Annual Earnings by Highest Educational Attainment

Procedures

1. Introduction and Warm-up, Whole Group (15 minutes):

Trainer begins by welcoming the group and identifying this session by giving a brief overview of Unit 2 and the three activities that will be completed as part of this unit: Activity 1, *The Changing Landscape,* Activity 2, *The AP Program: Nuts and Bolts*, and Activity 3, *What Can Parents Do to Help.* Trainer then introduces him/herself and gives a brief description of his/her background. Trainer then goes around the room and asks parents to introduce themselves and to indicate what grade their children are attending.

2. Completion of handout (10 minutes) - Individual participants

Trainer distributes to parents the Handout #1 *Is a College Education Important? Presenter* asks parents to complete the first question: Give at least three reasons why your child should attend college?

3. Whole group (20 minutes)

The trainer invites parents to share their responses and write them on a flip chart. Trainer gives a brief lecture using the Introduction to the Unit and the Background Information about the changing demands of the workplace and the importance of adequate high school preparation for post-secondary education. Trainer tells parents that recognizing and valuing the importance of a rigorous curriculum and the potential abilities of their children is essential to success. Trainer then presents overheads #1 and #2, College Pays Off and comments on the changing job market as a socioeconomic factor of the *Changing Landscape.* Data and reasons for college education will be compared with participants' responses. Constructive comments should be offered on these responses.

4. Closing summative remarks (15 Minutes)

Trainer concludes Activity 1 by announcing the importance of knowing about the Advanced Placement Program as a way for children to achieve the academic preparation needed for college access and degree completion.

Activity 2
The Advanced Placement Program: Nuts and Bolts

Goal of Activity 2:

The purpose of Activity 2 is to provide the audience with the facts about the College Board Advanced Placement program and its impact on students' access to college and to a successful career. Participants will also learn the importance of beginning college preparation at an early age in order to succeed in the AP program at the high school level and gain college credits by taking AP tests.

Background Information:

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) has earned an enviable position in the world of education. As the premier program for Advanced Placement and credit by examination, it has emerged as an important lever for promoting high academic standards for America's high school students. In the midst of debates about the quality of American education, AP is regularly cited as a high quality program that works. The products of a unique collaboration between high school teachers and college faculty, AP is the de facto standard for academic programs that help students make the transition from high school to college. More than 800,000 high school students took AP exams in 2003. That is the largest number of students to participate in AP in any year, but a small number relative to the current population of high school students. Many more students could succeed in AP if they had the opportunity to enroll and had a good preparation for challenging course work. Educators must make a commitment to equity of access to AP courses and offer students an opportunity to acquire the skills needed to succeed in them. Pragmatically, maximizing both equity and quality may not be possible in the short term, but in the long term, both are essential because there is no true AP equity without AP quality. AP functions in a political, social, and economic environment characterized by rapid change and new demands on the equality and accessibility of higher education. Educators and the community and parents must explore the best way to position AP so that students have access to a high quality education in every school. The commitment to equity and quality must be uncompromising and enduring.

Approximate time required: 60 minutes

Material needed: Overhead projector, notepad or flipchart, markers.
Handout # 2 *Preparation for College*
Overheads *#3 Advanced Placement, #3 What Are the Benefits of Taking Advanced Placement, #4 Building Equity and Success, #4 College Access #5 What Can Schools Do To Help, #6 What Can Schools Do to Help #6 What Can Students Do*

Procedures:

1. **Introduction and warm-up, Whole Group** (15 minutes)
    Trainer briefly summarizes Activity 1

2. **Facts about pre-AP and AP - Whole Group** (15 Minutes)
   Trainer introduces the information on Advanced Placement using the General Introduction to
   Unit III and the Background information to Activity 2. Trainer shows overhead # 4, #5, #6 as
   he introduces the information.

3. **Parents input on preparation for college. Whole group discussion** (20 minutes)
   Trainer shows overhead #7, #8, #9 and elicits answers from the audience about the importance
   of a college education, schools encouragement, and student participation and responsibilities.
   Trainer records the answers on a flipchart.

   For parents of low-income and minority students, this information may be new and may raise
   many questions. Trainer should be attentive to answer all questions and refer parents to the
   website: collegeboard.com for more detailed information. Emphasis should be placed on the
   availability of programs funded by the Advanced Placement Incentive grant and supported by
   the Department of Education. Parents should feel free to get in touch with the grant director
   or log on the Department of Education website if they have any questions or need further
   information.

4. **Summing up** (10 Minutes)
   Trainer sums up major points of the whole group discussion.

Activity 3

Supporting Your Children's Academic Achievement

Goal of Activity 3:

The goal of Activity 3 is to give parents realistic goals and activities that will enable them to encourage their children to begin planning for college at an early age.

Background Information:

With regards to outreach to parents, McCall (1999) outlines successful initiatives. Families should be introduced to the importance and demands of a rigorous pre-AP and AP classes and examinations to earn college credits while in high school. These classes will help them succeed in college and complete a degree. Counselors should have evening information sessions and workshops for students and their families.   They should also help students and parents with financial aid forms and with college applications. Teachers should also spend a fair amount of time explaining to parents the amount of work that students have to do, the kind of work that will be done, and how students will be graded. Inviting former successful students to attend evening meetings to share their progress in college with current students is also helpful.

Gaining parents' understanding and cooperation is also crucial to students' success. Both parents and students should learn about the importance of preparing for college while in high school and the need of a college education to achieve a successful career. Parents should be informed about the pre-AP and AP programs as opportunities for their children's successful access to college and completion of a degree. In this context, parents will encourage their children to attend AP courses and support the demands that AP will make on their children.

Approximate time required: 60 minutes - or up to 90 minutes according to time available.

Materials needed:
> Flipchart and markers
> Handout *#2 Parental Involvement, Handout 3 Involvement Log*
> Overheads
> *#12 What Can Parents Do to Help: an Open Letter, #13 Setting Clear Priorities, #14 Communicate High Expectations, #15 Become Involved*, #16 *Benefits of Parental Involvement, #17 Benefits of parental Involvement: Students*

Procedures:

1. **Introduction and warm-up - Whole Group -** (20 minutes)
   Trainer briefly sums up information acquired in activities 1 and 2 and tells parents that they will now be able to use the information and map out strategies to contact their children's school and ask questions about pre-AP and AP. They will also be able to plan how they can best support their children as they enroll in rigorous classes that require an increased amount of time dedicated to homework and reading.

2. **Whole group - Group work -** (30 minutes)
    Trainer places slide #11 on overhead and explains the definition of parental involvement. Trainer will then ask parents to complete handout #2. They can complete this activity individually or in groups. If the trainer decides to complete the group activity, parents should be grouped according to the grade their children are attending.

3. **Whole Group Discussion -** (30 minutes)
    Trainer will place on overhead slide #12. Parents will participate in discussion by comparing their answers with the ones suggested by the trainer. Trainer will record on flipchart parents' answers. Answers will be compared with the guidelines for parental involvement given in slides #13, #14, #15.

4. **Reviewing the Responses to the Handouts -** (15 minutes)

5. **Concluding remarks -** (15 minutes)
    Trainer will briefly overview the materials and the information presented in Unit 2 and encourage parents to use the handouts and suggestions offered to ensure that their support to their children will be effective.

Activity 1 at a Glance

The Job Market: A Changing Landscape

Step	Time Allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Introduction and Warm-up activity	15 minutes	Review of materials in folders	Overview of activity and general introduction	Parents get to know the purpose of the activity and learn about the other members in the group
Completion of Handout #1	10 minutes	Handout #1	Individual brainstorming	Parents will be aware of their own ideas and thoughts about the topic of college education
Viewing of slides 1 and 2	20 minutes	Slides #1 and #2	Group brainstorming, Viewing and discussing data	Parents will share their ideas and view statistical data
Closing and summative remarks	15 minutes		Summing up the information of Activity 1	Parents will acquire an informed view of the need of a college education

Activity #2 - At a Glance
The Advanced Placement Program: Nuts and Bolts

Step	Time allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Introduction Warm up	15 minutes		Trainer sums up information of Activity 1 and introduces Activity 2	Parents will be introduced to the concepts of rigorous curriculum and courses
Lecture	15 minutes	Slides 4, 5, 6	Trainer explains facts of pre-AP and AP programs	Parents will be informed about College board pre-AP and AP program and testing
Questions and answers	30 minutes		Trainer will respond to questions about AP programs	Parents will become knowledgeable about the opportunities of Advanced Placement programs

Unit 2
Advanced Placement: The Road to College Success

Activity #3 - At a Glance

Parental Involvement

Step	Time allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Introduction and warm-up	20 minutes	Slides 7, 8, 9, 10	Reviewing previous information and connecting it to Activity 3	Parents will reflect on information received
Whole group and Group work	30 minutes	Handout #2	Brainstorming parental involvement	Parents begin to brainstorm their own involvement and share their ideas
Suggested Strategies	35 minutes	Slides 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	Specific information and practical plans	Parents will leave the workshop with clear plans and practical suggestions on how to get involved
Concluding remarks	15 minutes		Reviewing information	Parents will conclude Unit 2 with a plan of school involvement and awareness of importance of academic achievement

Activity # I

Is a college education important?

List at least three reasons why you think your child should go to college a get a degree:

1._____

_____

_____

2._____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

What is the best way to prepare for college?

_____

_____

When should a student begin to prepare for college?

_____

_____

Activity # 2

Parental Involvement

My child <u>is in</u>____grade

or

My children are in the following grades:

_____

_____

_____

The best ways to support my children achieve in school are:
(List at least three)

1._____

2. _____

3._____

Homework Tips
For Parents

Creating a Homework Environment

- Create a quiet study corner where your child can do homework
- Save a space on a shelf or on any other piece of furniture where your child can leave his books and notebooks
- Avoid receiving or making phone calls during homework

Getting started

- Ask your child to share with you the events of the day and what he/she learned in school

- Get information about homework policies and grading from the teachers
  Most teachers post the work on their website. If you have a computer, you can access it and check the homework assignments

- Let your child teach you the lesson

Completing the homework to learn

- Keep in touch with the teacher about questions and anxieties your child may experience to help him complete difficult assignments

- Tell your child that learning is recursive. Difficult concepts should be read several times; papers should be revised carefully, reflecting on the readings is necessary to understand the materials read.

Encourage your child to read beyond the daily assignments. Visit the library and limit the time spent in front of the TV

My Involvement Log

Keep a list of the following involvement:

1. Activities complete in school (open house, meetings with teachers, attendance at statewide meetings, participation in school committees and any other function)

2. Record the specific dates, times, contact persons, telephone number and E-mails

Date	Name or Type of Activity	Time	Contact Person	Telephone Number	E-mail

Actividad # I

¿Es importante una educación universitaria?

Haga una lista de tres razones describiendo por qué Ud. piensa que su hijo debe asistir a una universidad y obtener un título:

1._____
_____
_____

2._____
_____
_____

3. _____
_____
_____

¿Cuál es la mejor manera de prepararse para la universidad?
_____
_____

¿Cuándo debe empezar un estudiante a prepararse para la universidad?
_____
_____

Actividad # 2

La participación de los padres

Mi hijo/a está en el _____ grado

ó

Mis hijos están en los siguientes grados:

_____

_____

_____

La mejor manera en que yo puedo ayudar a que mi hijo/a tenga éxito en la escuela clases es:
(Mencione tres, por lo menos maneras)

1._____

2. _____

3._____

Consejos para padres sobre como ayudar a los hijos a hacer la Tarea

Creando un ambiente para hacer la tarea

- Encuentre un lugar tranquilo en la casa donde su hijo/a pueda realizar la tarea.
- Haga espacio en un estante u otro mueble para que su hijo/a pueda guardar sus libros y cuadernos.
- Evite el uso del teléfono durante las horas en que su hijo/a estudia o trabaja.

Preparándose

- Pídale a su hijo/a que le cuente a Ud. los sucesos del día y lo que él/ella han aprendido en sus clases.

- Obtenga información acerca de las reglas sobre las tareas y el sistema de calificación de los profesores. La mayoría de los profesores mantiene esta información en sus páginas web. Si Ud. tiene una computadora, Ud. puede acceder a esta información y revisar la tareas asignadas.

- Permita que su hijo le enseñe a Ud. la lección que ha aprendido.

Haciendo las tareas para aprender

- Mantengase en contacto con el/la profesor/a acerca de las preguntas e inquietudes que tiene su hijo para ayudarle a completar las tareas difíciles.

- Enséñele a su hijo que el aprendizaje es un proceso. e deben leer muchas veces; los trabajos escritos se deben revisar cuidadosamente;   es necesario reflexionar en las lecturas para entender lo que se ha leído.

- Promueva que su hijo lea más que las lecturas asignadas diariamente. Visite la biblioteca y limite el tiempo que su hijo/a pasa o mirando la televisión.

Mi diario de participación

Mantenga una lista de su participación en las siguientes actividades:

Actividades que se realizan en la escuela ('open house' reuniones con los profesores, asistencia a las reuniones a nivel estatal, participación en comités escolares y cualquier otra función y/o actividad relacionada con la escuela).

Anote las fechas específicas, las horas, nombre de las personas encargadas, los números de teléfono, y las direcciones de los correos electrónicos.

Fecha	Nombre ó tipo de actividad	Hora	Nombre de la persona encargada	Número de teléfono	Dirección de correo electrónico

References

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Unit 4

Families and Schools Working Together:
A Partnership for Success

Information and Techniques Schools, Educators, and Families Can Use as They Work Together to Increase Student Participation in Advanced Placement (AP) Courses and Programs

Purpose of Unit 4:

The main purpose of Unit 5 is to provide parents with specific suggestions for getting students into the courses and programs leading up to participation in the AP programs.

Activities:

1. **Helping My Child Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses**
2. **Developing a Contract between School, Parents, and Students**

Background Information for the Trainer:

As mentioned earlier, the Advanced Placement Program (AP) is one in which high academic standards introduce students to a college curriculum and allows them to earn college level credit while still in high school. It improves students' skills for achieving in college and increases confidence in their ability to succeed. Such experiences are valuable to any student planning to attend college but are even more important to students:

- without a family experience of college attendance;
- without a "book culture" at home;
- who interact among peer groups who do not consider education a promising option for the future;
- who attend schools that do not emphasize college preparation.

Tracking practices are another barrier that impedes minority students from enrolling in Advanced Placement courses. Tracking is the practice of placing students in different classes based on perceived differences in their abilities. It takes a variety of forms, including remedial and special education programs, as well as programs for gifted and talented students. At the high school level, many school systems distinguish between college preparatory and vocational tracks. Because each level of schooling builds on earlier prerequisites, students assigned to lower tracks in elementary and middle school have little opportunity to take Advanced Placement courses.

Students who are assigned to lower tracks seldom have the opportunity to learn high level content and to become critical thinkers. According to Oakes' studies (1985, 1990, 1995) high-track teachers in all subjects often stress having students become competent and autonomous thinkers. In contrast, low-track teachers place greater emphasis on conformity to rules and expectations.

Minority students, particularly African American and Latino students, are often overrepresented in lower tracks. As a consequence, they have limited opportunities to be eligible to take advanced courses. In order to increase the number of minority students in Advanced Placement courses, schools need to revisit their tracking systems and replace them with other practices. Gifted minority students with the potential to succeed in pre-AP and AP courses should be identified in elementary or middle school and provided with support to succeed in a rigorous curriculum once they reach high school. These practices and others selected according to the needs of the different schools should be implemented to ensure that all students have access to gatekeeper courses, such as algebra, enabling them to take advanced courses in high school.

Low expectations and preconceived negative perceptions that sometimes school counselors and/or teachers have of African American and Latino students also impact on the low representation of minority students in accelerated tracks and Advanced Placement courses. Research conducted by Oakes (1995), indicates that in one of the schools that she studied, Latino eighth graders with "average" scores in mathematics were three times less likely than similarly scoring whites to be placed in "accelerated" math courses. The discrimination was even more striking among the highest-scoring students. While only 56 percent of Latinos scoring between 90 and 99 percent NCEs were placed in accelerated classes, 93 percent of whites and 97 percent of Asians gained admission to these classes.

Negative perceptions of Latino and African American students can also affect the courses and sequence of courses that they are "advised" to take. As Villegas and Watt (1991) indicate, students from different backgrounds sometimes receive different information, advice, and attention from counselors and teachers. While many secondary schools claim that students "choose" their tracks, low-track, minority students most often report that others made decisions for them.

It follows that in order to successfully increase the enrollment of culturally and linguistically diverse students in Advanced Placement courses, educators must re-think the way schools and learning are structured and students' needs are addressed.

To succeed in accomplishing the target goal of increasing minority participation in Advanced Placement courses, schools should provide:

- Flexible curricula that prepare all students for AP-level academic courses, both in middle and high school programs;

- Adequate information, support, and counseling (academic, social, and emotional) to participate in Advanced Placement courses;

- Effective pedagogy and content learning strategies that enable African American and Latino students to access knowledge and skills that prepare them to participate successfully in AP courses and programs;

- Qualified staff who have expert knowledge in the courses they teach and experience in teaching students of linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds;

- Effective and meaningful assessment strategies to assess students' knowledge of content and to assess overall program effectiveness; and

- <u>Family involvement</u>, including how to build effective relationships with students and families that support student success and provide meaningful opportunities for families to be involved with their children in activities at school, at home, and in the community.

Activity 1
Helping My Child Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses

Background Information for the Trainer:

Several studies indicate that parental involvement is one of the critical factors in motivating students and actually helps them to take the necessary steps to enroll in Advanced Placement courses. This finding is particularly important given the fact that other studies have shown that a significant number of students are not aware of the importance of taking "gatekeeping" courses in mathematics and science, while at the same time they show interest in continuing their studies into college.

A nationally representative survey of public school students and parents conducted by Louis Harris Associates for the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), Inc. in 1996, found that large numbers of students would like to stop taking mathematics and science courses as soon as they can. Fifty-one percent of the 5th through 11th grade students surveyed indicated that they would take mathematics classes only as long as required, while 47 percent reported they would study science only as long as it is required. Minority students of all ages were more likely than other students to say that they would like to stop taking mathematics and science as soon as they could. Distressingly, young minority students, (5th through 8th graders) were more likely to indicate that they planned to drop mathematics and science as soon as they were able to (61 percent planned to drop mathematics, and 58 percent planned to drop science).

However, the same students indicate that they would be interested in going to college and taking college-level mathematics courses. Eighty-six percent of all students surveyed said that they would like to go to college. Although less than half of the 9th to 11th-grade students said that they planned to take Trigonometry or Algebra II in high school, nearly two-thirds said that they were interested in taking Advanced Placement courses. These contrasts signal that many students do not understand the importance of, and requirements for, taking rigorous mathematics and science courses in high school, including the need to take algebra by the 8th grade. In fact, only 25 percent of minority and 42 percent of non-minority 5th through 8th-grade students recognized that if they did not take algebra they would not be able to take other mathematics classes in the future.

More importantly, results of the survey also showed that parent and teacher involvement play an important role in students' decisions about mathematics and science. According to the NACME survey, 94 percent of students indicated that their parents' or guardians' advice was important to them in deciding what they would study in school, and 88 percent indicated their teachers' advice was important. Ninety-one percent of parents want their children to continue their education beyond high school.

Further analysis of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data indicates that students with greater levels of parental involvement are more likely to take advanced mathematics courses. Analysis of the course-taking patterns of the National Education Longitudinal Studies (NELS), students who were in 8th grade in 1988, reveals that higher levels of parental involvement were consistently associated with a higher likelihood of taking rigorous mathematics courses. Seventeen percent of students who said that they discussed school programs three or more times during the previous semester, took algebra I by the 8th grade. Students whose parents or teachers indicated greater levels of parental involvement were also more likely to take advanced courses. Thirty-seven percent of students whose parents said that they rarely talked to their child about high school plans took geometry by the 10th grade, while 48 percent of those students whose parents said they regularly spoke to the child about high school plans took geometry by the 10th grade. While 27 percent of students whose teachers said their parents were not involved took geometry by the 10th grade, a full 63 percent of the students whose teachers said that their parents were very involved took geometry by the 10th grade.

Goal of the Activity: To increase the active participation of parents in the school-parent-student partnership.

Approximate Time Required: 1 hour.

Materials: Transparencies, handouts.

Procedures:

1.   Introduction. Describe the main purpose of the session.

2.   Lecture. Use transparency *The Importance of Parental Involvement in Education Decisions* to explain to parents the importance of their involvement in helping students succeed academically and enroll in Advanced Placement courses. Then provide each parent with a copy of the checklist *Helping my Child to Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses*. Present the checklist to demonstrate to parents the steps involved in helping their children. Ask parents if they are familiar with the steps. Ask parents who have more experience share their own stories and provide advice to the other parents.

3.   Small group activity. Divide participants into small groups. Have them use the checklist to identify areas of difficulty in accomplishing each of the steps. Next to each area of difficulty, ask parents to identify resources or solutions to help them accomplish the task. Have the groups select a recorder and a presenter to share their ideas to the entire group.

4.   Whole group activity. Have each group present their thoughts.

Helping My Child to Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses

What do I need to do?	Who can help me and/or with whom do I need to collaborate?
Find out what is the sequence of courses that leads to Advanced Placement courses	Teachers, counselors, principal
Request assistance if school information is provided in a language I do not understand	Principal, ESL teachers, counselors, parent coordinator
Identify the courses my child is currently enrolled in	Teachers, counselors
Meet with the counselor and teachers to determine what my child needs to do in order to take the necessary courses to be eligible for Advanced Placement courses	Counselor
Find out if tutoring and/or mentoring programs are available to help my child improve academically	Counselors, teachers, principal
If my child is an English Language learner, find out what courses are available to accelerate my child's learning and increase opportunities to enroll in Advanced Placement courses	Principal, counselor, ESL teachers
Meet regularly with counselors, teachers, and/or principal to monitor my child's progress and assist him/her as needed	Counselors, teachers, principal
At home, provide space and time to complete homework. Ask teachers and/or school for assistance if my child has difficulty completing and/or understanding homework	Family members, teachers
Develop a partnership with my child to help him/her achieve in school and enroll in Advanced Placement courses. Talk with my child about school and future plans on a regular basis. Encourage my child to share his/her successes and troubles with us (parents) at home	Family members, extended family
Become an active member of school partnerships that are developed to increase the enrollment of minority students in Advanced Placement courses	Parents, guardians, and/or members of extended family

Ayudando a mi hijo/a a matricularse en cursos de Advanced Placement

¿Qué necesito hacer?	¿Quién me puede ayudar y/o con quién necesito colaborar?
Enterarme de la secuencia de cursos que conducen a los cursos de Advanced Placement	Profesores, consejeros, el/la director/a
Pedir ayuda si la información que provee la escuela está en un idioma que yo no entiendo	El/La director/a, profesores de Inglés como segundo idioma, consejeros, coordinador/a de padres
Identificar los cursos en que mi hijo está matriculado	Profesores, consejeros
Reunirme con consejeros y profesores para determinar qué necesita hacer mi hijo para matricularse en cursos que reúnan las condiciones necesarias para ser elegible para los cursos de Advanced Placement	Consejeros
Investigar si están disponibles cursos de enseñanza particular o un programa de orientación para ayudar a que mi hijo mejore académicamente	Consejeros, profesores, el/la director/a
Si mi hijo aprende Inglés como segundo idioma, investigar cuáles son los cursos disponibles para acelerar el aprendizaje de mi hijo y para incrementar las oportunidades de matricularse en cursos de Advanced Placement	El/la director/a, consejeros, profesores de Inglés como segundo idioma
Reunirme regularmente con consejeros, profesores, y/o el/la director/a para seguir el progreso de mi hijo y para ayudarle como sea necesario	Consejeros, profesores, el/la director/a
En casa, proveer espacio y tiempo para la realización de la tarea. Pedir ayuda a los profesores y/o a la escuela si mi hijo encuentra dificultad al completar y/o al entender la tarea	Miembros de la familia, profesores
Desarrollar una relación con mi hijo para ayudar a que logre sus metas en la escuela y que se matricule en cursos de Advanced Placement. Hablar regularmente con mi hijo acerca de la escuela y sus planes de futuro. Animar a mi hijo a que comparta sus éxitos y problemas con nosotros (los padres) en casa.	Miembros de la familia, familia extendida
Hacerme miembro activo de asociaciones centradas en incrementar la participación de estudiantes minoritarios en cursos de Advanced Placement	Padres, guardianes, y/o miembros de la familia extendida

Activity 2
Developing A Contract Between School, Parents, and Students

Background Information for the Trainer:

Research indicates that developing a partnership with linguistically and culturally diverse parents is one the most promising practices in parental involvement (Swap 1990; Basterra 1998). Successful partnerships are those that involve the sustained mutual collaboration, support, and participation of school staff and families at home and at school. Schools that have developed successful partnerships with parents view student achievement as a shared responsibility; all stakeholders including parents, administrators, teachers, and community leaders play important roles in supporting children's learning .

The schools, educators, families, and students all have roles and responsibilities to carry out as they work in partnership to improve access to, and participation in, Advanced Placement courses and programs.

As mentioned earlier, schools and educators need to make sure that school structures and educational offerings are aligned with their efforts to increase the number of African American and Latino students that participate in the Advanced Placement courses.

It is important that all the information and advice provided by parents throughout the initial stages of the training be analyzed, summarized, and included in the overall plan to increase the enrollment in Advanced Placement courses.

This last activity should result in the culmination of a deeper understanding of both parents and educators of what needs to be accomplished in order to reach a common goal. A contract developed jointly by parents and educators will provide an effective tool to accomplish the necessary steps for success.

We have provided a sample copy of a school-family-student partnership contract for review before conducting the next activity. Ideally, the activity should also include students at a later stage.

Goal of the activity: To develop a joint contract between school and parents.
Approximate Time Required: 1 hour.

Materials: Handouts. *School-Family-Student Partnership Contract (completed and blank form)*

Procedure:

1.	Introduction: Describe the main purpose of the session.

2. Whole group activity: Have parents pull out their handout *Helping My Child to Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses* and their notes on how to solve potential problems in accomplishing the tasks outlined in the handout. Have educators pull out their completed *School-Family-Student Partnership Contract*. Explain to the group that you are going to develop a joint contract based on their previous activities.

3. Small group activity: Divide the whole group into small groups of combined parents and educators. Have the group select a recorder and a presenter. Then, provide the group with a blank version of the *School-Family-Student Partnership Contract*. Ask each group to discuss the different responsibilities involved in each part, come to consensus about the content, and then complete the form. If needed, select facilitators to guide the process. The end result should be a contract that both educators and parents find acceptable.

4. Whole group activity: Have each group share their contracts with the group. Highlight common elements and include them into a new blank form of the *School-Family-Student Partnership Contract*. The group should come to a consensus on all parts of the contract. Ideally, as a follow-up activity, the same process should be conducted with students who are interested in participating in this process.

School-Family-Student Partnership Contract

As a school, we will	As a family, we will	As a student, I will

School-Family-Student Partnership Contract

As a school, we will	As a family, we will	As a student, I will
Have high expectations of all our students.	Have high expectations of our children.	Expect to do well in school.
Have policies and practices in place to ensure access for all students to courses that lead to AP participation (detracking, accelerated courses).	Inquire if the courses our children are taking will allow them to enroll in Advanced Placement courses in the future.	Request advice from my counselor and teachers as to course selection and special programs that will enable me to increase my chances to enroll in AP courses in the future.
Provide information to parents on the long-term benefits of participating in AP courses and in acquiring a college education.	Attend meetings organized by the school and encourage our children to pursue getting ahead in school and consider a college education.	Talk to my parents and teachers about my interests and/or concerns about AP courses and college education.
Inform families and students about the high academic standards at the school and the sequence of courses necessary for all students to take AP courses in high school.	Attend meetings that the school organizes about academic standards and the sequence of courses that lead to AP.	Ask my counselor, teachers, and principal about the courses that I need to take in order to participate in AP courses.
Use multiple criteria to assess student's ability and potential to participate in AP courses.	Become familiar with the criteria and assessment system the school uses to pre-select students for Advanced Placement courses.	Ask my counselor and teachers about assessment and criteria used to pre-select students for Advanced Placement courses.
Provide students with guidance and support to enroll in courses that lead to AP participation.	Assist our children in the process of enrolling in all the courses that lead to AP participation.	Enroll in courses that lead to AP participation.
Have a process in place to identify and prepare minority students to take AP courses.	Talk to teachers to discuss the possibility of having our children enrolled in AP courses.	Talk to my teachers about my interest in enrolling in AP courses.

Contrato de Colaboración entre la Escuela, la Familia y el Estudiante

Como escuela, nosotros	Como familia, nosotros	Como estudiante, yo

Contrato de Colaboración entre la Escuela, la Familia y el Estudiante

Como escuela, nosotros	Como familia, nosotros	Como estudiante, yo
Mantendremos altas expectativas de todos nuestros estudiantes.	Mantendremos altas expectativas de nuestros hijos/as.	Espero rendir academicamente bien en la escuela.
Tendremos políticas y prácticas que aseguren que todos los estudiantes tengan acceso a cursos que conduzcan a la participación en AP (* detracking, cursos acelerados).	Preguntaremos si los cursos en que están matriculados nuestros hijos les permitirán matricularse en cursos de AP en el futuro.	Pediré consejo a mis consejeros y profesores en cuanto a la elección de cursos y programas especiales que me permitirán incrementar mis oportunidades de matricularme en cursos de AP en el futuro.
Proveeremos información a los padres sobre los beneficios a largo plazo de la participación en cursos de AP y la forma de obtener una educación universitaria.	Asistiremos a reuniones organizadas por la escuela y animaremos a nuestros hijos a que prosigan yendo bien en la escuela y considerando una educación universitaria.	Hablaré con mis padres y profesores acerca de mis intereses y/o mis preocupaciones sobre cursos de AP y una educación universitaria.
Informaremos a las familias y a los estudiantes de los altos estándares académicos en la escuela y de la secuencia necesaria de cursos que necesitan los estudiantes para matricularse en cursos de AP en la escuela secundaria.	Asistiremos a las reuniones organizadas por la escuela acerca de los estándares académicos y la secuencia de cursos que conducen a AP.	Preguntaré a mis consejeros y a mis profesores acerca del sistema de evaluación y los criterios que se utilizan para pre-seleccionar estudiantes para cursos de AP.
Utilizaremos criterios divesos para evaluar la habilidad y el potencial de un estudiante para participar en cursos de Advanced Placement.	Nos familiarizaremos con los criterios y el sistema de evaluación que usa la escuela para pre-seleccionar estudiantes para cursos de Advanced Placement.	Preguntaré a mis consejeros y a mis profesores acerca de los criterios que se usan para pre-seleccionar estudiantes para cursos de Advanced Placement.
Proveeremos a los estudiantes de consejos y apoyo para matricularse en cursos que conducen a la participación en AP.	Ayudaremos a nuestro hijo en el proceso de matricularse en todos los cursos que conduzcan a participación en AP.	Me matricularé en cursos que conduzcan a participar en AP.
Tendremos un proceso para identificar y preparar a estudiantes minoritarios para matricularse en cursos de AP.	Hablaremos con los profesores para discutir la posibilidad de matricular a nuestro hijo en cursos de AP.	Hablaré con mis profesores sobre mi interés en matricularme en cursos de AP.

*Nota del traductor: "tracking" es la agrupación de estudiantes del mismo nivel académico en las mismas clases. "Detracking" es la agrupación de estudiantes de diferentes niveles académicos en una misma clase.

Activity # 1 At-a-Glance
Helping My Child To Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses

Step	Time Allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Introduction and warm-up activity	10minutes	None	Overview of activity and general introductions	Parents get to know the main purpose of the activity
Whole group presentation	15 minutes	Overhead *The Importance of Parental Involvement in Education Decisions* Checklist *Helping my Child Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses*	Presenter shares information about: 1) the impact of parents' involvement in helping their children make educational decisions; 2) steps to help children to enroll in Advanced Placement courses	Parents become aware of their impact on educational decisions. Parents become aware of the steps needed to help their children become enrolled in AP courses
Small group activity	30 minutes	Checklist *Helping my Child Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses*	Parents identify potential obstacles to following suggested steps and come up with possible solutions to overcome obstacles	Parents become more knowledgeable about specific steps; identify possible difficulties in accomplishing tasks; and come up with ways to solve potential problems
Whole group activity	20 minutes	Completed checklists, flip chart, markers	Parents share their ideas with the group	Parents learn new ways to improve process by listening to other groups

Activity # 2 At-a-Glance
Developing a Contract Between Schools, Parents, and Students

Step	Time Allocation	Materials	Summary of Activity	Outcome
Introduction and warm-up activity	10minutes	None	Overview of activity and general introductions	Parents get to know the main purpose of the activity
Whole group presentation	15 minutes	Checklists: 1) *Helping my Child Enroll in Advanced Placement Courses; 2) School-Family-Student Partnership Contract*	Presenter shares information about the importance of school-parents partnerships; presents the group with the school's plan to improve the participation of minority students in AP	Parents increase their knowledge of the importance of school-parents partnerships. Parents become aware of the school's plan to improve the participation of minority students in AP
Small group activity	30 minutes	Checklist School-Family-Students Partnership Contract (blank form)	Parents and educators jointly identify key strategies and/or activities to improve the participation of minority students in AP	Parents and educators develop a set of contracts to improve the participation of minority students in AP
Whole group activity	20 minutes	Completed checklists, flip chart, markers	Educators and parents share their ideas with the group and develop a final contract	Parents and educators develop a final contract

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Section III

Website Resources

Center for Law and Education   http:/www.cleweb.org

College Board for Students, Parents, and Professional   http://www.collegeboard.com/

Delaware Sate Parent Advisory http://doe.state.de.us./schoolimprovement/SPCA.htm

Family Education Network http://www.familyeducation.com

National Parent Information Network http://npin.org/index.html

Family Education Network http://www.familyeducation.com/home/

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education http://www.ncpie.org

No Child Left Behind for Parents http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov.parents.index.html

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs
        http://www.pta.org/programs/pfistand.htm

Questions Parents Ask About School
        http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/questions/part.html

Tools for Student Success http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html

What's up with Starting Middle School www.channing-bete.com

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Family Involvement Information & Training Kit
Presenter's Evaluation Form

Directions: Please rate each of the following aspects of the training session by using a 1-5 rating system with 5 meaning "excellent" and 1 meaning "poor."

Training Session	**Excellent**				**Poor**
Planning and preparation of training session	5	4	3	2	1
Pace and format of training session	5	4	3	2	1
Presenter's knowledge of content	5	4	3	2	1
Clarity of explanations, concepts, and ideas	5	4	3	2	1
Suitability of handouts/materials	5	4	3	2	1
Usefulness of information	5	4	3	2	1
Suitability of location	5	4	3	2	1
Overall quality of training session	5	4	3	2	1

Please respond to the following question and give us your comments
What additional topics I would like to see addressed at future training sessions?

_____

_____

Comments

_____

_____

Paquete de Información y Entrenamiento para la

Participación Familiar
Evaluación del Presentador

Direcciones: Por favor evalúe cada uno de los aspectos de la sesión de entrenamiento utilizando un sistema del 1 al 5, donde 5 significa "excelente" y 1 significa "pobre."

Sesión de Entrenamiento	Excelente				Pobre
Planeamiento y preparación de la sesión	5	4	3	2	1
Ritmo y formato de la sesión	5	4	3	2	1
Grado de conocimiento del tema del presentador	5	4	3	2	1
Claridad en las explicaciones, conceptos e ideas	5	4	3	2	1
Grado de utilidad de los panfletos/materiales	5	4	3	2	1
Utilidad de la información	5	4	3	2	1
Local donde se llevó a cabo la sesión	5	4	3	2	1
Calidad de la sesión en conjunto	5	4	3	2	1

Por favor responda a la siguiente pregunta y denos sus comentarios

Qué tipo de temas adicionales me gustaría que se tratasen en futuras sesiones?

_____

_____

Comentarios

_____

_____