

Chapter 7

COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The responsibility for the education and healthy development of school-age children must be shared by the entire community, including the board of education and the local governing body.

Obstacles to academic achievement exist not only in schools, but are also evident across the community: poor behavioral choices such as substance abuse, violence, bullying, and gang activity; children unsupervised after school hours (latch key children); limited access to technology (the digital divide); a lack of social/academic support systems including counseling, and a lack of healthy food choices. Regardless of its demographics, a community may face one or more of these challenges.

The Importance of Communication

Board of education communication with stakeholders is essential to keep the community fully informed of the challenges facing schools and their students and to gain support for critical efforts to advance academic achievement. Failure to communicate has negative consequences. Individuals who need academic support or who are displaying unhealthy behaviors have fewer adults to help guide them to increased learning and better behavior choices. Additionally, opposition to funding programs that address challenges can grow when the community is not aware of problems facing its schools and its youth.

The Task Force on Student Achievement considers the following activities essential to a sound relationship among all elements of the community:

- To ensure that school and community services are meeting students' needs, the board of education must establish and maintain trusting relationships throughout the community, with special attention to the municipal governing body. Transparency and consistency in decision-making contribute to trust.
- Since the major portion of the local property tax levy is dedicated to school purposes, the superintendent and board of education should communicate with municipal officials about the school budget and make presentations at governing body meetings. Such efforts build trust by demonstrating fiscal responsibility and transparency.
- The school board and municipality should consider appointing liaisons to attend each other's meetings and serve as ongoing points of communication.
- Beyond the typical six-hour school day and 180-day school year, students spend their time at home and in the community. Therefore, a comprehensive plan to promote student achievement and healthy decision-making must involve the municipal governing body, the faith-based community, service organizations, local industry and small businesses, as well youth-service organizations.

A Communications Plan

The Task Force believes that school districts should develop strategic communications plans, which:

- Maintain relationships with the print and electronic news media;
- Establish a method of one-to-one communication within all sectors of the community;
- Include collaborative efforts with the municipality, other government agencies, and non-profit organization;
- Use available resources such as public access cable television (for example, broadcasting daily announcements highlighting academic, athletic and cultural news to build bridges with the community), and
- Establish a means to alert the community in cases of emergency.

The task force recommends that communications strategies include the development of “talking points” – e.g., a “three-minute elevator speech” – for use by school officials and education advocates to make the community aware of student needs and to elicit support for efforts to advance student achievement.

“A communication plan is a written document that records and directs the objectives, goals and strategies of the district in achieving educational success,” states a presentation, “Communicating with Your Community,” prepared by NJSBA’s Field Services Department.

As outlined in the presentation, a sound communications plan:

- Is developed collaboratively by the school and community.
- Serves to foster student achievement through the establishment of a positive school climate.
- Involves parents and citizens.
- Builds community knowledge.
- Builds community understanding, leading to support for education.
- Creates transparency.
- Builds Trust.

“Communicating with Your Community,” Field Services Department, New Jersey School Boards Association.

Key Communicators

To facilitate communications, the Task Force on Student Achievement believes that school districts should consider establishing a “Key Communicator” program.

“A key communicator network allows a school district to get accurate news out to staff and community quickly,” states a guidance document developed by NJSBA’s Field Services

Department. “It enables school officials to intercept potentially harmful rumors. And it costs very little to set up and maintain.”

The network should include residents who speak with large numbers of people in the community, who are trusted by others and whose opinions are respected.

- “Key communicators should represent the many different demographic segments of the community as well as the various segments of the school district staff.”
- “Key communicators agree to disseminate accurate information about the school system and correct misinformation. They keep in touch with school officials and immediately report misperceptions and inaccuracies.”
- By providing feedback to the school district, the network “[e]nables school officials to establish two-way communication and get a quick pulse of the community.”

“You Are the Key,” School District Key Communicators, Field Services Department, New Jersey School Boards Association, Trenton, NJ.

The value of Key Communicators is not only to share information with the community from the school district, but to also to listen to discussions in their neighborhoods, on athletic fields, and in local stores, the Task Force on Student Achievement finds.

Emergency Alert Systems

The Task Force on Student Achievement also recommends the use of multi-platform emergency alert systems. The recommendation corresponds to the findings of another NJSBA study group.

In its October 2014 report, citing the experience of school districts affected by Superstorm Sandy two years earlier, the NJSBA School Security Task Force made the following recommendation:

To ensure communication with all members of the school community, law enforcement and emergency responders, school districts should implement multi-platform emergency notification systems that use telephone, email, text messaging, website and other methods of communication.

“Relying on only one form of communication is not a recommended best practice,” states the NJSBA report, *What Makes Schools Safe?* “As experienced by many Sandy-impacted school districts, some communication platforms will not operate during an emergency and community members may not have access to a particular system...”

“The New Jersey State Police and several local law enforcement agencies use the multi-platform mass notification system. Such products are currently available to school districts.”

What Makes Schools Safe? Trenton, NJ: New Jersey School Boards Association, 2014, 58-60. Accessed February 3, 2017, <https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/news-security-task-force-final-report.pdf>.

School-Municipal Collaboration

In a 2015 survey of school and municipal officials, prepared for presentations at the annual conferences of NJSBA (“Workshop”) and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, 87.2% of respondents answered “yes” to the following question: “Do your school district and municipality share services?”

In addition, over 80% said there was a financial benefit from sharing services, while a plurality said collaborative efforts improved the quality of services.

The survey listed 13 possible types of shared services and asked respondents to identify those that are currently shared by their school districts and municipalities. A number of the shared services provide support for the academic program, youth services and student safety; many focus on business operations.

The most frequently cited were maintenance and use of recreational fields (63.9%), ensuring the safety of walking routes (44.1%), buildings and grounds maintenance (43.2%), emergency management (38.8%), school security (30%), joint purchasing (17.2%), and technology/broadband (12.8%).

One-third of the state’s communities were represented in the survey results.

The survey respondents also listed a wide range of strategies to promote positive relationships and collaboration. They include formal committees or liaisons between the school board and municipal governing body, regularly scheduled meetings between representatives of the two bodies, including the mayor and superintendent; and community partnerships and *ad hoc* efforts on common issues.

Belluscio, Frank, “Town Hall and the School House: New Grounds for Cooperation,” *School Leader*, 46, no. 2 (January-February 2016), New Jersey School Boards Association, accessed January 23, 2017, <https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/school-leader/januaryfebruary-2016-volume-46-4/town-hall-school-house-new-grounds-cooperation/>.

In its deliberations, the Task Force on Student Achievement identified other possible collaborative efforts, including some that directly address student achievement.

- Use of public library space for off-campus tutoring of suspended students;
- Mentoring and career programs that provide guidance and information about work experiences and opportunities through local government, businesses and industries;
- Board of education representation on appropriate municipal boards and commissions such as those overseeing zoning, planning, recreation, the public library, and emergency management;
- Access to school district facilities for special uses such as administration of tests for police recruits, shelters, voting stations, and centers for youth and senior citizen activities;
- Local government-sponsored Veterans Day and Memorial Day essay writing contests;

- Performance by high school groups at community events such as parades, senior citizen gatherings, and memorial services;
- Coordination/communication between the municipality and school district concerning school closures for snow storms, or other emergencies, and
- Invitations to the mayor and municipal officials to graduation ceremonies, homecoming, school plays and concerts, and other events.

A Role for the Entire Community

Through many of its programs, the Search Institute, a 50-year-old organization dedicated to using social science research “to understand the lives, beliefs and values of young people, promotes a “Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth” ® philosophy in which all members of a community contribute to the healthy development of children.

“Search Institute History,” *Search Institute: Discovering What Kids Need to Succeed*, accessed February 3, 2017, <http://www.search-institute.org/about/history>.

A number of communities have implemented programs that reflect “Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth” ®.

The **Hopewell Valley Municipal Alliance**, for example, builds community awareness of the benefits of “developmental assets” in youth. Identified by the Search Institute, the Developmental Assets “are building blocks young people need to become healthy, principled and caring adults,” states the Alliance’s website. “The more developmental assets in a young person’s life, the less likely he or she is to engage in at-risk behaviors.” (See the “40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents” on page 65 of this report.)

Established in 1996, the alliance is a partnership among “all sectors of the community, including municipal governments, businesses, school, police, clergy, civic organizations, health professionals, recreation organizations, parents and students...” According to its webpage, the alliance administers over 20 programs and activities geared toward drug and alcohol awareness and education, positive youth development and overall public safety in Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township and Pennington. (Contact: Heidi Kahme at hvma@hopewelltwp.org.)

“Municipal Alliance,” *Hopewell Valley Regional School District*, accessed February 3, 2017 at http://www.hvrsd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=352372&type=d&pREC_ID=764474.)

The **South Brunswick Board of Education**, in partnership with the South Brunswick Municipal Alliance and other entities, is involved in several community service and education programs to promote student health and safety and academic success. Programs include the following:

- **Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth Assets Initiative** promotes the building of Developmental Assets, as identified by the Search Institute. It receives grant funding from the Governor’s Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. (Contact: Christine Mariano at healthyyouthassets@sbtnj.net.)

- **Every Person Influences Children** provides resources for parents, teachers and community members to help children become responsible and capable adults. The program offers small discussion group workshops through the South Brunswick Parent Academy and at district schools. (Contact: Christine Mariano at SBPA@sbpschools.org.)
- The **Community Resource Team** is an ongoing partnership of organizations and agencies, committed to maintaining a healthy and safe community. The team works to assure clear, accurate and effective communication during emergencies and helps assess the effectiveness of a response following an event in the community. The school district, township government, police department, health department, social services agencies, township clergy association and other groups are represented on the Resource Team. (Contact: Raphael Morales at raphael.morales@sbschools.org.)

(School-Community Partnerships, *South Brunswick School District*, accessed February 3, 2017 at http://www.sbschools.org/parents_students/partnerships/index_nl.php#crt.)

Collaboration with Higher Education

The Task Force believes that collaboration among school districts and academia can enhance teaching and learning for all students. Membership in the Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement (RIISA), part of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, and the Rutgers New Jersey School Development Council can provide exemplary instructional strategy and leadership professional development.

“Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement,” *Rutgers Graduate School of Education*, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Accessed March 21, 2017 at <http://riisa.gse.rutgers.edu/>.

“New Jersey School Development Council,” *Rutgers Graduate School of Education*, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Accessed March 21, 2017 at <http://njsdc.gse.rutgers.edu/>

In addition, participation in the National Network of Partnership Schools, located at Johns Hopkins University, can prove worthwhile. The professional development provided by networking with other schools and education personnel and the related guides and parental involvement materials can contribute to successfully addressing the achievement gap and school climate challenges.

“National Network of Partnership Schools,” *Center for the Social Organization of Schools*, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University. Accessed March 21, 2017 at <http://nnps.jhucos.com/>.

Collaboration with State Government

Collaboration may also involve state agencies. The New Jersey Department of Children and Families for example, operated [School-Based Youth Services Programs](#) in 67 high schools, 18 middle schools and 5 elementary schools.

Task Force members provided examples of youth service programs in Passaic County. (See page 66 of this report.)

40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

External Assets:

SUPPORT

1. Family Support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive Family Communication	Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Other Adult Relationships	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. Caring School Climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
5. Caring Neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.
6. Parent Involvement in Schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

7. Community Values Youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as Resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to Others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety	Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

11. Family Boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood Boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. Adult Role Models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive Peer Influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High Expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. Creative Activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth Programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
19. Religious Community	Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at Home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets:

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

21. Achievement Motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to School	Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

POSITIVE VALUES

26. Caring	Young Person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and Social Justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

32. Planning and Decision Making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance Skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

37. Personal Power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. Self-Esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of Purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. Positive View of Personal Future	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Copyright © by Search Institute, 615 First Avenue N.E., Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55413. All rights reserved. Accessed Jan. 31, 2017, <http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>.

The New Jersey Community Development Corporation teamed up with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families to operate programs at [Passaic County Technical Institute](#), [Clifton High School](#), and [Passaic Valley High School](#), which operate as “Teen Centers.”

These programs acknowledge that young people come to school with many different problems, and that students have to overcome challenges they face *outside* the classroom before they can succeed *inside* the classroom. They provide students with year-round academic support services, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, life skills, health education, employment services and recreational activities. Students and families can access a variety of resources in one convenient location: their own school building.

“The comprehensive ‘one-stop shopping’ design helps break down barriers and bureaucratic roadblocks that too often prevent young people from obtaining services and supports,” states the Department of Children and Families website.

The [Paterson Youth Council](#), organized by New Jersey Community Development Corporation, is the premier voice for the young people of Paterson, representing and engaging the city’s youth and giving them opportunities to advance themselves and their community. Made up of 30 dynamic young residents of Paterson between the ages of 14 and 18, the youth council serves as a venue to discuss issues that concern them most.

Through service learning and community involvement, participants cultivate confidence, independence, maturity, leadership skills and a voice of their own. Members of the Paterson Youth Council are not only active in the school community, but also regularly attend City Council and Board of Education meetings. Ultimately, the members discuss, produce and present proposals in these venues, offering respected insight into the concerns of Paterson’s future leaders.



Recipients of the Paterson Youth Council’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Youth Recognition Awards, with state and local leaders, including Senate President Steve Sweeney and Senator Nellie Pou.

New Jersey Department of Children and Families, *School Based Youth Services*, (Trenton, NJ). Accessed December 29, 2016 at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/families/school/>.

Passaic County Technical Institute, *The Teen Center*, (Wayne, NJ). Accessed March 19, 2017 at https://www.pcti.tec.nj.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=592.

Clifton Public Schools, *Clifton High School-Based Youth Services Program*, (Clifton, NJ), accessed March 19, 2017 at www.clifton.k12.nj.us/hs/youthservicesprogram.asp.

Passaic ResourceNet, *School Based Youth Services-Passaic Valley High School*, (Little Falls, NJ, April 2013). Accessed March 19, 2017 at <http://www.passaicresourcenet.org/search/school-based-youth-services-passaic-valley-high-school/>.

New Jersey Community Development Organization, *Paterson Youth Council*, (Paterson, NJ). Accessed March 19, 2017 at <http://www.njcdc.org/~njcdc/what-we-do/page.php?Early-Childhood-Youth-Development-Paterson-Youth-Council-7>.

Research on Community Involvement

The definitions of “community” and “community involvement” as they relate to student achievement encompass many elements and stakeholders—for example, the home, school, law enforcement, parents, family, neighbors, teachers, and administrators.

After reviewing scores of articles, a pattern emerges regarding the importance of family and neighborhood involvement and their impact on student achievement. For this chapter, the Task Force focused on studies that involve numerous districts and schools and/or which represent meta-analyses of recent research.

The Impact of Parents

A 2007 report from the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University reviewed the progress of a 5-year, longitudinal study on the impact of community on student achievement in reading, math, and science. Key findings include:

- District leadership can help schools conduct outreach to involve families.
- District leaders play a major role in establishing parent liaison positions, which can improve home-school relations.
- Parental involvement is related to student motivation.
- Students who reported more parental involvement at home also noted higher levels of self-competence.

Epstein, Joyce, Ph.D., Mavis G. Sanders, Ph.D., Steven B. Sheldon, Ph.D. *Family and Community Involvement: Achievement and Effects*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships, 2007. Accessed March 3, 2017 at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9d78/161baa841df07321378176acfd2a9d40609.pdf>.

The Harvard Family Research Project in 2005 published a paper on parental involvement and student achievement that summarized 77 studies of 300,000 students from elementary and secondary schools. The author conducted this meta-analysis to determine the overall effects of parental involvement on children's academic achievement in kindergarten through 12th grade. Findings include the following:

- Parental involvement is associated with higher achievement outcomes.
- This pattern holds true across ethnic and racial groups.
- Reading and communicating with one's child, along with parental expectations, have a significant impact on educational outcomes, with parental expectations being the strongest.
- Parental involvement programs do work.

The author recommends that schools institute strategies to enhance parental involvement. In addition, teachers, administrators and school counselors should be trained to guide parents on ways to become involved with their children's educational achievement.

Jeynes, William H. *Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Family Research Project, 2005. Accessed March 3, 2017 at <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/parental-involvement-and-student-achievement-a-meta-analysis>.

The Impact of Community

A 2004 article addressed the role of the larger community on school success.

In "[*Research Link/How the Community Influences Achievement*](#)" (May 2004), John H. Holloway speaks to the question of how much the larger community affects school success. His article cites a 1999 study of the impacts of various community demographic characteristics on the academic success of elementary school children.

The 5th graders' academic performance correlated negatively with neighborhood risk even after controlling for demographic indicators of family risk, such as family income and employment status. This negative impact did not extend to the study's 3rd grade subjects, however. The researchers speculated that before students reached 5th grade, they spent more time in the home and had less opportunity to be influenced by the larger community.

Holloway also references a 2000 study, which used Virginia Department of Education data to address the influences of community, school, and family structure on academic achievement of eighth-grade students as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Community education level and students' socioeconomic status were the strongest predictors of success on standardized tests. The researchers concluded, however, that all of the factors studied were interrelated and that programs to optimize education opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth must address more than these two factors. They recommended implementing a holistic approach to adequately address the complex variables at work in communities.

Other research referenced by Holloway found that "supportive neighborhoods" can mitigate the harmful effects of economic disadvantage on student achievement.

An increase in student achievement will be limited if reform efforts focus solely on students while they are in the classroom, Holloway concludes. "Instead, policymakers must also look at the broader picture," he writes. "They must consider how to increase the community's capacity to support its children and youth so that students' experiences outside school will enhance the teaching and learning that goes on inside school."

Holloway, John J., "Research Link/How the Community Influences Achievement," *Educational Leadership* 61, no. 8 (2004): 89-90. Accessed March 3, 2017 at <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/-How-the-Community-Influences-Achievement.aspx>

Shumow, Lee, Deborah Lowe Vandell and Jill Posner. "Risk and Resilience in the Urban Neighborhood: Predictors of Academic Performance Among Low-Income Elementary School Children," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 45, no 8 (1999), Article 8.

Baker, Spencer R., Zina T. McGee, Wanda S. Mitchell, Helen Randolph Stiff, *Structural Effects on Academic Achievement of Adolescents*, ERIC Reproduction Service, ED No. 448 890 (2000). Accessed March 15, 2017 at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED448890.pdf>

The Impact of Neighborhood

In a 2012 article posted by *The Atlantic*, Sarah Garland, the executive editor of the *Hechinger Report*, speaks to the importance of bringing together the poor and affluent to share both classrooms and neighborhoods. Garland says it is not enough to attack poverty, urban blight and failing schools in isolation.

She reports on Atlanta's Charles Drew Charter School, which moved from last to fourth in the city on state achievement tests. Its academic improvement was directly influenced by a housing initiative that combines federally subsidized rentals for poor tenants with market-rate units that attract university students, young professionals, and middle-income families. The diversification of the neighborhood was reflected in the school.

"...a growing research base is suggesting that integrating schools by income might be one of the most effective ways to close the achievement gap," she states.

Garland, Sarah. "Rich Kid, Poor Kid: How Mixed Neighborhoods Could Save America's Schools," *The Atlantic* (July 25, 2012). Accessed March 15, 2017 at <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/07/rich-kid-poor-kid-how-mixed-neighborhoods-could-save-americas-schools/260308/>.

A 2013 study conducted in England cited previous research supporting the relationship between neighborhood composition and academic achievement. Nonetheless, the study effort was unable to support that conclusion, but it did find that "changes in neighbourhood composition have...some effects on behavioural outcomes..."

Gibbons, Stephen, Olmo Silva and Felix Weinhardt. "Everybody Needs Good Neighbours? Evidence from Students' Outcomes in England," *The Economic Journal*, 123), 831–874 (September 2013) © 2013 The Authors. Accessed March 15, 2017 at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/45248/1/_lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_Secondary_libfile_shared_repository_Content_Silva,%20Everybody%20needs_Silva_Everybody%20needs_2014.pdf.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 7 – Communication, Collaboration, Parental Involvement

FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Communication

45. Develop a strategic communications plan that encompasses media relations, one-to-one communication, and creation of a common message to build support for efforts to advance student achievement.
46. Establish a key communicators program to ensure effective two-way communication between the school district and community at-large—including dissemination of accurate information from the school district to the community and provision of critical feedback from the community to the school district.
47. Develop discussion points for use by school officials and education advocates to make the community aware of the needs of all students, including those who are struggling, and to elicit support for district efforts to advance student achievement.
48. Secure a reverse-dial emergency notification system with phone, text, and email capabilities to announce emergency school closings, special events, and keep the community informed when there is a significant emergency. Ensure that parents and community members, including senior citizens, are able to select the mode(s) of communication (landline, cell, text, email, etc.) they prefer, based on the topics to be communicated (general information, special announcements, emergency information, etc.).

Collaboration

49. Establish a collaborative relationship with the municipal government through efforts such as regularly scheduled meetings between school and municipal officials and the appointment of liaisons between the school board and governing body. The goal of such collaboration should be to support programs that advance student achievement, healthy decision-making, and a safe and secure school environment.
50. Involve the municipal government, faith-based community, service organizations, local industry and small businesses, as well youth-service organizations, in a comprehensive plan to promote student achievement and healthy decision-making.
51. Work with the municipality to support efforts to diversify neighborhoods and school communities economically and racially/ethnically. Models can be drawn from Hope VI and Urban Homesteading housing programs.

52. Work with higher education to enhance instructional strategy and professional development. Consider membership in the [Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement](#) and the [New Jersey School Development Council](#), both located at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education.

Community/Parental Involvement

53. Develop training programs for parents on how to guide the schoolwork of their children. Partner with universities and colleges to assist in family training.
54. Consider membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools (<http://nnps.jhucsos.com/>), which provides training to schools, networking opportunities, and guidance on parental involvement.
55. Conduct a needs assessment to provide information on the current status of community and neighborhood involvement. Seek the observations and advice of teachers, who are in continuous contact with students.
56. Seek government and private funding to implement initiatives involving parental/community involvement, housing policy, and education program improvements. NJSBA's Grants Support service (<https://www.njsba.org/services/grants-support/>) provides all New Jersey school districts with an online portal to more than 3,200 funding opportunities available through the federal government, the state, and foundations.

FOR THE NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION:

57. Continue to advocate for legislation and state code that advances student achievement.
58. Continue to model effective collaboration by working with other advocates on all efforts to advance student achievement through effective local school district governance.