

PASS 3: Strategies that Enrich and Expand Student Learning

Recent News Article is Among Many that
Validate the Purpose of the NJ PASS Model for Home/School Partnerships

The PASS model refers to the term "parent" as any adult who plays an important role in a child's family life.

Partnerships such as those in the PASS model inform parents about what their children are learning and provide strategies on how to help them at home in ways that are connected to school success and gains in achievement. Parent engagement in education is a powerful but underutilized tool to support children's learning, development, and academic achievement. PASS implementation shines a light on forward-thinking educators and parents in New Jersey who implement strong partnership ideas to support student learning and academic achievement. The information below was adapted from a current article in the publication Education Week and is shared here to encourage productive conversations among PASS partners. Below is an adaptation of the Education Week article By **Anthony Rebor**a on May 27, 2015

Study: Teacher Outreach to Parents Has 'Under-Explored Potential' in Schools

A new study by researchers at Harvard and Brown universities finds that regular, personalized communications between teachers and parents can in fact have a significant impact on struggling students' chances for success in their classes.

The research suggests that the finding is particularly true if teachers' regular messages include specifics about what students can do to improve their work.

The study, part of a series on low-cost school-improvement strategies, was aimed at helping parents better support their children in school. It was conducted by Matthew A. Kraft of Brown University and Todd Rogers of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and involved 435 high school students who were enrolled in a summer credit-recovery program for failing students in a large urban school district. Parents of the students were randomly assigned to one of three groups:

- The parents in group one received a short weekly message (by phone, email, or text) from their child's teachers on what the students were doing well.
- Those in group two received personalized weekly communications about what their son or daughter needed to do in order to improve.
- Finally, parents in a control group received no messages from the teachers.

The personalized home/school communications on how students could improve focused on strategies that parents could support or monitor, such as making up a missed assignment or quiz.

By the end of the class, the researchers found that when parents received a weekly communication from teachers, students were 41 percent *less* likely to fail or dropout of the class than the students whose parents received no communication at all. In the group where teachers and parents communicated weekly it was clear that the students had more in-depth conversations with their parents about their schoolwork and about where they needed to improve.

The researchers concluded that the under-explored potential of teacher-parent communication as an area in which many school communities could easily and affordably add to their efforts to improve student achievement.

PASS - Rethinking parent engagement in student learning requires a conscious effort and new vision of student support inside and outside of school. There is no doubt that the PASS model is new to all stakeholders, however, when parents are encouraged and entrusted to play a direct role in student learning, districts can add a powerful component to their student achievement efforts. A school's comprehensive plan to improve student learning and achievement will benefit students more if it includes a new role for parents and a new definition of meaningful home/school partnerships.

*The New Jersey Department of Education's model for home/school partnerships – **The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)** provides documents and support tools intended to compliment information about the state's academic standards and annual assessments for students. The PASS model provides resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to build home/school partnerships in the best interest of students' academic success. For information on the NJDOE PASS model go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Send questions to: informccss@doe.state.nj.us.*