What Parents Should Know About Adolescent Development: The Role of Schools

Steven Sheldon
Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
National Network of Partnership Schools
Johns Hopkins University
What Do We Know about Family Engagement?

• Adolescents want parents and family members involved in their education

• Students are the most powerful influence on family involvement, but teachers are still very important

• Efforts should focus on Involvement at Home
  • Support homework and project completion
  • Communicate expectations for attainment
School Practices that Encourage Family Engagement
Interactive Homework

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)

- Assignments guide students to demonstrate and discuss skills with a family member
- Allows for two-way communication
  - Families see what students are learning at school
  - Families are given space to provide teacher feedback on how the assignment went
- Assigned once a week, in place of regular homework
Interactive Homework

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)

- Quasi-experimental Studies indicate:
  - High rates of homework completion
  - Students and families had more positive attitudes and emotions about homework
  - Small to moderate, positive effect on student achievement ($d=0.23-0.49$)

- Separate studies in middle school Science, Mathematics, and Language Arts
Progressing Through High School

Evening Advisement

Northside High School, GA

- Students, Parents, Advisor meet to discuss progress and next steps toward graduation
  - 3 evenings in 2nd semester
  - Meetings by appointment (nearly 1,100)
  - Advisors reviewed records, test scores, and courses

- Previous registration took 2 days, and parents said they wanted to be better informed and more involved in the decision-making process

Communicating with Families

Look What’s Happening Here
Chiawana High School, WA

- School Action Team/Gear-Up Partnership

- Evening program to give family members a chance to view resources at the school
  - Cardio-lab (combining fitness and mathematics)
  - Computer Lab (investigate colleges, Parent Portal)

- Babysitting and transportation provided