

## ***Family and Community Involvement***

*Knowledge is power. Information is liberating.  
Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.*

*-Kofi Annan*

*Close school-community relationships are at the heart of successful, comprehensive, and inclusive equitable schools. To educate all students successfully, accommodate the unique educational needs of each child, and welcome families' participation in their children's education, the school must invite broad participation from families, local religious organizations, advocacy groups, local businesses, and government. Education is at the core of all vital communities, so there is a great urgency for forging and sustaining strong school*

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*community linkages (Haynes & Comer, 1996).*

*The sheer size of many urban challenges requires carefully orchestrated initiatives across community agencies, schools, and neighborhood organizations. Any one group working alone may fail to make much progress and some problems may remain unresolved, but collaboration and team work often generates the shared vision, needed synergy, and practical strategies that can succeed in bettering the conditions and outcomes for both students and their families and neighbors.*

*Parents, family, and community members also directly contribute to the work of schools. Parents and families bring an understanding of the broader community and social development needs and strengths of children to the learning environment that can inform school planning and influence curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Strong linkages with families can help school personnel more sensitively honor and incorporate different cultural and linguistic perspectives, values, and practices into the life and learning of the school community (Hepburn, 2004).*

### **Equity in Action**



began the work by engaging a multitude of stakeholders in broad, deep listening and learning forums and on developing

efforts needed to ensure success for every student.

Educational equity is the cornerstone of their plan,



**2015 - Investing in Our Future** puts Washoe County School District on the pathway of reform. It contains five goals based on student academic success, human capital development, family and community engagement, positive self-renewing culture, and performance management. The strategic plan details high expectations and includes action plans based on the best teaching and learning methods.

Heath Morrison,  
superintendent at WCSD,

trusting, productive, collaborative relationships with the WCSD Board, staff, and community. He deliberately and proactively reached out to all family and community members and also sought out typically underrepresented, diverse stakeholders.

EnvisionWCSD2015 goes beyond speaking about the importance of parent and community involvement and seeks to proactively engage them, with an intentional focus on those who have previously been underserved or excluded. By increasing family and community initiatives and evaluating them for improvement, the district plans to strengthen relationships and understanding of the necessary collaborative

and the Equity Alliance will be supporting WCSD as they address and challenge underlying assumptions and expectations around student language, behavior, and instructional approaches. Our partnership will enhance best practices around increasing workforce diversity, student achievement, and cultural awareness, and will include classroom observation and walk-through tools for all administrators.

WCSD's promise to the community is to focus on 'every child, by name and face, to graduation.' We wish them all the best as they embark on this ambitious journey.

Look at the complete goals created by Washoe County School District [here](#).

## Featured Equity Friend

### Center For Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE)

The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE), a national technical assistance and dissemination project, works toward elevating the capacity of educators, family members, service providers and other stakeholders to engage in collaborative problem-solving and other positive, non-adversarial processes. Ultimately, this approach results in better educational programs and outcomes for students with disabilities. CADRE delivers high quality technical assistance and informational support to state education agencies (Part B), early intervention lead agencies (Part C), parent centers, local education agencies, local early intervention providers, and dispute resolution practitioners.



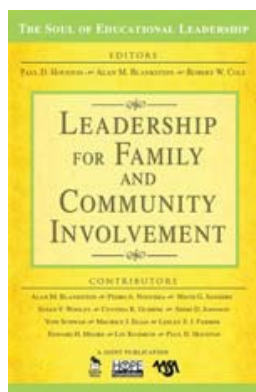
## Tools You Can Use

[Creating Welcoming Schools: A Practical Guide to Home-School Partnerships with Diverse Families by JoBeth Allen.](#)

This engaging and rich resource details how schools and diverse families throughout the country have formed partner that support and enhance student learning. It is designed for teachers who care deeply about students and welcome diverse families as partners, for parents who want to be active partners in educating their children, and for administrators in diverse schools or districts who know there is no quick fix for building lasting partnerships among families, schools, and the community.

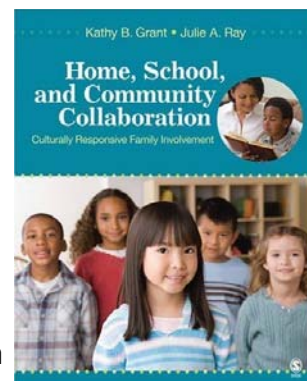
[Leadership for Family and Community Involvement by Paul D. Houston, Robert W. Cole\(Editor\), Alan M. Blankstein\(Editor\).](#)

Because schools are the heart and soul of a community, educational leaders have a responsibility to bring the community into the school, as well as to make the school a part of the surrounding community. This volume in the Soul of Educational Leadership series goes beyond administrative skills to examine educators' pivotal role of leading family and community involvement in school success. With articles written by leading authorities and practitioners in the field, this resource discusses how school leaders can build successful family and community partnerships that flourish even in trying circumstances and over time.



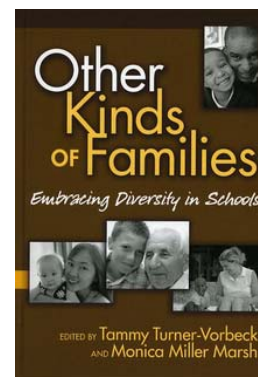
[Home, School, and Community Collaboration: Culturally Responsive Family Involvement by Kathy B. Grant & Julie A. Ray.](#)

Filled with practical suggestions and reflective opportunities, Home, School, and Community Collaboration uses the culturally responsive family support model to prepare readers to work with children from diverse families. This text includes contributions from 24 experts in the field in addressing the issues in family involvement that today's teachers are likely to encounter.



[Other Kinds of Families: Embracing Diversity in Schools Edited by Tammy Turner-Vorbeck and Monica Miller Marsh.](#)

Turner-Vorbeck and Marsh suggest an urgent need to reconsider the ways in which families are currently represented and addressed in school curriculum and culture. In this important volume, they provide critical and theoretical analyses combined with narrative experiences to address such issues as multigenerational views of the schooling experiences of immigrant families, the educational needs of gay and lesbian families, and the experiences of homeless students and their families with the educational system.



## Online Publications

[Building Collaboration Between Schools and Parents of English Language Learners: Transcending Barriers Creating Opportunities](#)

## Online Tools

[Let's Try Series](#) by Dianne Ferguson  
The "Let's Try" series is made up of practical ideas of how to build and strengthen connections between family, school and community at various levels.

Parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) represent a vital source of support for increased student engagement and achievement; they bring skills, values and knowledge that would benefit both students and teachers. Most importantly, they bring profound commitment and motivation: The majority of the parents of ELLs have come to the United States in order that they and their children will have a "better life." This brief discusses how to build collaboration between schools and parents of ELLs.

### Discrimination Matters

Every student has the right to an education free from discrimination that provides high-quality, equitable opportunities to learn. Discrimination occurs when people are treated unequally or less favorably than others because of some real or perceived characteristic. In schools, discrimination can make it difficult for students to learn because they don't feel safe or accepted. As such, finding ways to fight discrimination is essential to ensuring students' educational opportunity.

### A Parent's Guide to Parent and Professional Partnership and Communication Within Special Education

Clear parent and professional communication and effective partnerships do not "just happen." It takes time, energy, effort, and patience to build skills to communicate clearly and collaborate effectively. You may want to set a goal to become a more effective advocate for your child with a disability and then take the necessary steps to achieve this goal. It's worth the effort!

The focus is on developing a healthy communal environment that supports student achievement.

**CADRE (communication tips)** are available in both Spanish and English, is a brochure style information packet for parents that provides a range of tips from who to call with questions or concerns to effective communication tips that can be used to encourage solution oriented conversations. This is a great resource for parents as a guide to approaching school interactions and building strong relationships.

**Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology** The Family Center (FCTD) produces and distributes a range of informational resources on the subject of assistive technology. The Center's goal is to strengthen the ability of organizations throughout the country to provide current, accurate, and useful materials to the families of children with disabilities. **Back to School Supplies For Parents**

**Voice Thread**. Family and community involvement with schools is essential for the success of all students. Our voice threads engage that notion and hope to encourage rich discussion. [Join the conversation here!](#)

## Upcoming Events

**NASDSE's 73rd Annual Conference and Business Meeting** October 16-19, 2010 in Nashville, TN. The business meeting not only provides a report on the state of NASDSE, but in addition, it affords you the singular opportunity to meet just with your colleagues to have a private conversation about your most pressing issues and plan follow-up activities to address them. In addition, NASDSE's Board of Directors will be

presenting NASDSE's strategic plan which was previewed and discussed at last year's business meeting.

The National Center on Response to Intervention (RTI) will host [RTI Innovations Conference 2010](#) - RTI Unplugged, in Salt Lake City, UT, October 7-8, 2010. The purpose of this conference is to provide innovative ideas in implementing Response to Intervention at the pre-service, building, district, and state levels.

The 21st Annual Fall [Council for Exceptional Children \(CASE\) Conference](#) on October 28-30 in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. The theme for the conference is ***Unlock the Treasure in Leadership***. CASE is an international professional educational organization which is affiliated with the Council for Exceptional Children whose members are dedicated to the enhancement of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual in society.

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