Secondary Schools’ Fact Sheet\*

Family-school partnering in secondary schools is effective in increasing student achievement, reducing risky behaviors and improving postsecondary outcomes. When secondary schools think about family-school-community partnerships, there are special and specific challenges. These are as follows:

* Teachers have more students for lesser time;
* Schools are bigger;
* Families live farther away;
* Teachers tend to be “academic specialists” and have not typically been involved with families;
* Students are balancing independence and need for guidance and support;
* Subject matter, instruction, systems are more complex;
* Families need more guidance in supporting school and postsecondary success – it is more complicated and their role more complex.

It is important to intentionally plan for partnership at the secondary level. Forming a partnering team and/or putting partnering “on the agenda” for an existing group(s) is important. The following strategies have been shown to be effective.

* Personal outreach (students doing community service can make calls).
* Invitations to participate (students can invite and be present).
* Tying partnering to academic improvement goals (align partnering with school improvement priorities).
* Interactive homework (gives teenagers and family members something to talk about, reinforces learning, and families can be involved).
* Frequent and two-way communication between teachers and families (with students’ awareness of it occurring as a support for them).
* Students using their voices (ask and listen).
* Teacher support and training (see what will be helpful…).
* Focusing on transition years (elementary to middle, middle to high, and high to post-secondary).

Specific components of the *CDE MTSS Partnering Implementation Guide* have been designed to be useful in secondary schools, as well as earlier levels. Sample documents, including those for teachers and principals, can hopefully be adapted with a secondary “twist”. Videos and partnering stories have numerous middle and high school teacher reports. Targeted and Intensive tools focusing on problem solving can hopefully be useful to deans, case managers, and/or other staff who may be working with problem solving teams – all were developed to be flexible in format and communication venue.

Resources with specific reference to strengthening family and community partnerships at the secondary level are listed below.

* Constantino, S.M., (2008). *101 ways to create real family engagement*. Galax, VA: ENGAGE!

Press.

* Bridgeland, J.M., Dilulio, J.J., Streeter, R.T. & Mason, J.R. (2008). *One dream, two realities: Perspectives of parents on America’s high schools.* Retrieved from <http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/onedream.pdf>
* Constantino, S.M. (2003). *Engaging all families: Creating a positive school*

*culture by putting research into practice.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.

* Epstein, J.L. et al. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your*

*handbook for action.* Third Edition.Thousands Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

* National Network of Partnering Schools

[http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/researchpubs.htm - middleandhighschools](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/researchpubs.htm#middleandhighschools)

* TIPS: Teachers Involving Parents in Homework

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/tips/index.htm>

\* Material in this fact sheet was adapted from Epstein et al., 2009.