

Sharing Partnering Stories

from the Field

SACPIE Elementary Committee



COLORADO
Department of Education

Family, school, and community partnering (FSCP) is a critical component of student success. As such, FSCP should be integrated into school improvement and functioning, yet it is often conducted in isolation and seen as an add-on. As FSCP practices become increasingly recognized in importance in the education of children, it is vital that experiences be shared and that educators, families, and community members have opportunities to learn from one another.

The goal of Sharing Partnering Stories from the Field is to support all stakeholders in learning to celebrate successful examples of family, school, and community partnering and in demonstrating effective practices. Positive family, school, and community partnering examples teach others how to partner for effective academic and behavioral learning. On the other hand, sharing challenging partnering stories provide opportunities to collaborate on how to overcome similar experiences in the future.

Any stakeholder can implement Sharing Partnering Stories from the Field. Stories can come from any grade level and any setting. It's important to set guidelines and to create an advisory group that includes educators, families, students, and community resources. In order to celebrate as many successful stories as there are, and to spread the word through the school community, different publicity tactics can be used, such as sharing at faculty meetings or publishing the stories in newsletters or on websites.

For example, After hearing about the value of family-school partnering, a high school chemistry teacher reported that he had gone to his building administrator and asked about the possibility of putting the topic “on the agenda” for his professional learning community (PLC). Although she seemed skeptical, saying that high school students should be emancipating from their parents and developing their own sense of responsibility, the principal allowed the teacher try the discussion with his colleagues. The professional learning community thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity and now has partnering “on the agenda” for every meeting. Representatives from different departments share homework ideas and home-school communication strategies they are implementing. After several months, the group requested formal professional development opportunities to learn more about the research and strategies that are known to be effective.

During the second year of including the topic regularly in professional learning sessions, the PLC members decided to invite some family members on a monthly basis so as to offer their viewpoints and add a family perspective to school documents websites, and communications. The PLC also developed a “student advisory panel” that guided them in understanding the adolescent perspective. Through collaborative decision-making, it was determined that there was a need to incorporate some partnering data collection and analyses so as to better understand the effectiveness of their partnering practices. The PLC members surveyed families and students about how they perceived school-family partnering was working since they had been implementing some specific, intentional strategies around technology, communication, and homework. Several students mentioned that they now had more positive and interesting discussions about school with their families. One student was quoted as saying, “Yeah, it gives us something to talk about at dinner”.

Sharing Partnering Stories from the Field is an activity that brings stakeholders together with one common goal – understanding the positive impact that family, school, and community partnering has on student outcomes.

Standard 2—Communicating Effectively