



Empowering families with knowledge is frequently one of the most important ways that schools can work to build partnerships. This year, Pleasant View Elementary School began a Parent Academy in order to empower with knowledge, increase parent-to-parent interaction, and increase support of student learning and success.

For this first year of the academy, membership was by invitation from the school in order to allow for more targeted and specific support. The focus was building literacy for families of Preschool/Kindergarten students. Fifteen families were invited to join, and six of these became regular attendees. Though the meeting was intended to be monthly, it became twice a month because the parents wanted to meet more frequently!

The Parent Academy members meet for 2-hour sessions to learn new strategies, hands-on activities, and crock-pot cooking. Some examples of topics covered include creating a restful routine or students, the benefits of reading to your children, a guest speaker on the SafeCare community program, and taking care of yourself as a parent. The group of six families were encouraged to 'bring a friend' to widen participation. Cooking for group is a responsibility that is rotated among the attendees.

These meetings are also a great place for families to talk about upcoming events, recruit volunteers, hand out flyers and resources, share recipes, and discuss any current concerns. The academy is important for partnerships, as it is a place for parents to connect and build supportive relationships with each other while working to strengthen the support for their students. Parents are open and honest about struggles they're experiencing, and the academy is a safe and supportive environment to get help and build self-esteem on their journey to becoming empowered parents.