



## Strategies for Increasing Volunteerism and Attendance at School Events

*Information gathered and adapted from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, (n.d.) Strategies for increasing volunteerism and attendance at school events*

- ✓ Survey potential volunteers: Throughout the year, survey families about their interests and availability to volunteer (*Admin: check out the “S4 Family Involvement Checklist” found in the Engagement Manual under the Involving Families in School Section*).
- ✓ If you haven’t already, hire or appoint a volunteer coordinator: A volunteer coordinator can make phone calls to remind volunteers of their commitments, to provide training on equipment such as the copy machine, laminator, and playground equipment, and to organize volunteer activities and recognition events.
- ✓ Offer a variety of times to volunteer: We all have varied and hectic schedules, so successful school volunteer programs will offer flexible volunteer schedules.
- ✓ Offer training to volunteers: Offer volunteers training in family engagement opportunities as part of S4 (e.g. requesting a family session, organizing an S4 family night). Additionally training on navigating the S4 website, knowing what resources are available as part of S4 for families, where to find the family activities, etc. This will help volunteers feel competent about their ability to assist other families.
- ✓ Provide training for families so they can become parent mentors – S4 advocates: Parent mentors can work with new volunteers and answer questions at their school related to S4 and family engagement opportunities at the school.
- ✓ Encourage opportunities for volunteers to be seen as positive adult role models: Offer regular career exploration opportunities. Have volunteers answer basic questions about their careers, such as job title, subjects to take in school that will help them to do the job, training needed to do the job, great things about the job, and tough things about the job.
- ✓ Encourage opportunities for volunteers to come and speak about their culture – to other families, maybe in the classroom with students. You could even consider organizing a culture celebration



evening (see Mother Language Day Celebration in the Activities Appendix). Celebrating diversity is a way to create a more inclusive, accepting and understanding school culture.

- ✓ Publicize volunteer opportunities throughout the year: By publicizing volunteer opportunities year-round, families and community members who come to the school midyear can be made aware of the volunteer opportunities and can become connected with the school community.
  
- ✓ Include students in meetings with parents: Have students participate in some way in the meeting with parents. This provides additional incentives for families to attend together. If you aren't doing this already, consider times where students can provide updates on S4 as part of the school council update. This is another way to ask new parents to participate in your school council.

**Have fun with the way you encourage family participation at your school! There are many ways for families to be involved, and sometimes, families are just waiting for the opportunity to be asked.**

#### References:

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, (n.d.) *Strategies for increasing volunteerism and attendance at school events (pp. 10-11)* Retrieved August 16, 2013 from [http://www.pacer.org/mpc/pdf/titlepip/Supportinginvolvement\\_article.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/mpc/pdf/titlepip/Supportinginvolvement_article.pdf)