

Parental Involvement Toolbox



Project Appleseed
the national campaign for public school improvement



National Parental Involvement Daytm

Held on the third Thursday in November

Public School Volunteer Weektm

Held during the third week in April

Want to Improve Schools? Make Parent Involvement Meaningful.

Each school year, our signature family events reach over nine million family members in America's schools.

What if each person pledged a minimum of 10 hours?

It would produce 100 million hours of volunteer service with a \$2 billion impact on local public schools.



Project Appleseedtm
the national campaign for public school improvement



The Classic Parental Involvement Toolbox

Five effective parent engagement tools!

The Parental Involvement Pledge Learning Compact

Title I Compact, branded with your school's name and school logo - Master Hard Copy and On-Line version - for distribution to every student and family all school year long!

The Parental Involvement Report Card

Branded with your school's name and school logo, this is a self diagnostic tool for distribution to every parent, grandparent, and caring adult.

Fitness and Nutrition Parental Involvement Pledge

A family wellness compact to support children's participation in physical activities and healthy eating.

The Toolkit for Title I Parental Involvement from SEDL

We provide SEDL's (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) most recent research inside the Toolbox with detailed explanations of the Title I, Part A parental involvement provisions as well as 33 tools to assist state departments of education, districts, and schools in meeting these requirements.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Parent Engagement: Strategies For Involving Parents In School Health from

This publication defines and describes parent engagement and identifies specific strategies and actions that schools can take to increase parent engagement in schools' health promotion activities.



An easy comprehensive parent engagement platform!

An Innovative Parent Information System! ParentSquare is a simple and secure platform for school-to-home communication. The two-way messaging, online participation and simple user interface keeps everyone connected and engaged, creating a vibrant school community.

Premium Parental Involvement Toolbox



Parental Involvement Toolbox Communications Platform:

The All-in-One Parental Involvement Toolbox! ParentSquare and Project Appleseed have joined forces to offer schools and districts the easiest-to-use platform for dramatically improving parent communication and engagement at the lowest cost. A one-stop shop tool and resource center for parent engagement.

ParentSquare's web-based communications platform is loaded with Project Appleseed's award-winning Parental Involvement Toolbox. This package will provide schools with everything required to train and educate teachers and staff around how to leverage parent's involvement to support student success, while offering a simple and streamlined tool to reach and collaborate with every parent.

Pricing: Premium Parental Involvement Toolbox Annual Pricing = \$500 flat fee plus \$1 per student annual fee. Example Cost: If a school has 400 students, the annual cost: \$1 X 400 Students = \$400 or \$900.00 total. Annual Premium Subscription Parental Involvement Toolbox includes:

- 1 Year Subscription of ParentSquare's web-based platform
- 1 Year Subscription of Project Appleseed's Parental Involvement Toolbox

Terms and Conditions: The Premium Parental Involvement Toolbox offered with ParentSquare is a limited time offer only available through Project Appleseed. The annual subscription of the Premium Tool Box is offered from Oct 1 - March 1st 2016 while supplies last.



SEEK PARENTAL INPUT

Parent engagement and communication isn't a one way street. Create feedback channels for parents to respond and interact.



DRIVE RESULTS

Powerful metrics on parent reach, engagement and participation and ParentSquare usage by your school community.



WHOLE SCHOOL ADOPTION

A single communication tool that works for all your school admins, teachers, staff, PTA leaders, committees and parents.



PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY

Bring parents into their child's classroom experience giving them a 10ft view of learning and initiatives at school.



Classic Parental Involvement Toolbox Annual Choices

_____ **One Year -\$300.00** - Reproduction rights for one year at an individual school. Number of additional district schools? @ \$250.00 each _____

_____ **Two Years -\$400.00** - Reproduction rights for two years at an individual school. Number of additional district schools? @ \$300.00 each _____

_____ **Three Yrs. -\$500.00** - Reproduction rights for three years at an individual school. Number of additional district schools? @ \$400.00 each _____

Premium Parental Involvement Toolbox

_____ **Yearly subscription \$500.00, plus \$1.00 for each enrolled student.**

Project Appleseed's Premium Parental Involvement Toolbox now includes ParentSquare! Engage all families with ParentSquare's communications platform, embed Parental Involvement Pledge and Parental Involvement Report Card! Engage all of your school volunteers. All of your volunteer task. All your messages. And everything from scheduling, class supplies, pictures, school directory, fundraising and more all in one place. All together! **Total Number of Students** _____

Total Your Toolbox Here

1. Classic Toolbox _____ \$ _____

2. Premium Toolbox \$ 500.00 plus
\$1 X No. of Students = _____ \$ _____

Effective Date: _____

3. Membership: _____ \$ _____

4. Changes: Edit the Pledge to fit the needs of our school. Add \$50.00. _____ \$ _____

5. Rush Delivery. Requires 15 day payment. Add \$25.00. _____ \$ _____

SUB TOTAL _____ \$ _____

6. Discounts: 25% off for all re-orders. _____ % _____

TOTAL _____ \$ _____

* Allow 10 business days for delivery



Masterfiles are in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf files). Toolboxes are delivered by e-mail.

Project Appleseed Annual Membership

Parent Leader \$50.00

School Leader \$100.00

Community Leader \$150.00

National Honor Roll \$250.00

Your Information:

First Name: _____ Middle: _____ Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Required* School: _____ District: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Required* E-mail address: _____

Title: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mail: Payments and Purchase Orders to Project Appleseed / 520 Melville Ave / St. Louis, Missouri / 63130-4506

Fax: Purchase Orders to 314-725-2319 "Attention Project Appleseed" **Phone:** 314-292-9760

EIN: 43-1859663 A nonprofit 501 (c) (3)

W9: Taxpayer ID # and Certification - Email request to: headquarters@projectappleseed.org



The Need for Project Appleseed

Strong schools require groups of parents who are committed to student success. For many of these parents, the transformation from parent to volunteer and advocate begins with Project Appleseed's model learning compact – the Parental Involvement Pledge. The pledge asks parents to donate five hours to public schools each semester and 15 minutes per night to reading, homework, or enrichment activities.

Research shows that schools can improve their students' achievement by engaging parents. Unfortunately, in many of the lowest-performing schools, parents remain an untapped and largely unengaged resource. Parents are the most invested adults in the mosaic of education simply because they are parents. They are uniquely positioned to increase the one-on-one instruction their children receive by supplementing it at home, to facilitate attendance by monitoring their children's daily activities, to emphasize the importance of education and college attainment, and more. Therefore, parents must be an integral part of the solutions to educational challenges.

While the concept of parental involvement in and of itself is not new, schools, especially those that consistently under-perform, are often new to or inexperienced with the idea of nurturing it. Parents will not only be asked to walk a mile in the shoes of administrators and teachers; they will be asked to walk beside these professionals as partners and stakeholders.

The Need for Family Involvement

It may be difficult to overemphasize the importance and influence of parents. Their lack of input, when it exists, is an unmistakable and nearly insurmountable void. As Blazer (2005) points out, research shows that "meaningful family involvement is a powerful predictor of high student achievement. Students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students (Caplan, 2000). Students whose families are involved in their education typically receive higher grades and test scores, complete more homework, have better attendance, and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors.

Children of involved families also graduate at higher rates and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education programs (Riggins-Newby, 2004; Norton, 2003; Caplan, 2000; Binkley et al., 1998; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997). Henderson (1987) found that the academic benefits gained from family involvement with elementary school students continued through the middle and senior high school levels. Furthermore, studies have observed these positive outcomes regardless of students' ethnic or racial background or socioeconomic status, noting that students at risk of failure have the most to gain when schools involve families (Caplan, 2000; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997; Henderson, 1987).



Barriers to Family Involvement in Education

Recent research shows that numerous barriers to involvement exist for both schools and families. Some barriers are created by limited resources, while others originate from the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of families and school staff (Liontos, 1992). The most common barriers to family involvement include:

- Lack of teacher time.
- Teachers' misperceptions of parents' abilities.
- Lack of understanding of parents' communication styles.
- Limited family resources, such as transportation and child care.
- Parents' lack of comfort at the school.
- Tension in relationships between parents and teachers.
- Mobility.
- Lack of vested interest.
- Difficulties of involvement in the upper grades.

(Jones, 2001; Baker, 2000; Caplan, 2000; American Association of School Administrators, 1998; Liontos, 1992).

Additionally, Drake (2000) suggests that family involvement programs are often not fully implemented for the following reasons:

- School staff had not been trained to work with families.
- Administrators and teachers worried that increased family involvement would add to their already busy schedules.
- Educators were concerned that closer relationships with families would mean giving up power and decision-making.
- Families were not sure how far they could go in making suggestions or asking questions; they worried that children would be punished for their parents' actions by a teacher or principal who was annoyed or threatened by the parent.

Magnitude of the need

In his January 2011 State of the Union speech, President Barack Obama discussed the shared responsibility of the home, school, and community in enhancing our country's education system, stating, "...the question is whether all of us — as citizens and as parents — are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed. That responsibility begins not in our classrooms, but in our homes and communities."

In his keynote address at the MOM Congress on Education and Learning in May of 2010, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan likewise defined his vision for how parents can and should be engaged in their children's education:

"My vision for family engagement is ambitious...I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in their schools. I want all parents to be real partners in education with their children's teachers, from cradle to career. In this partnership, students and parents should feel connected—and teachers should feel supported... We need parents to speak out and drive change in chronically-underper-

forming schools where children receive an inferior education. With parental support, those struggling schools need to be turned around now—not tomorrow, because children get only one chance at an education."



U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Project Appleseed president, Kevin Walker

The President's and Secretary's remarks are aligned with a robust and comprehensive view of the role of families in their children's schooling. Instead of the involvement of parents being seen as a peripheral, compliance-driven aspect of whole school improvement, their vision calls for parents to be full partners with school staff and other members of the community in the work of creating and sustaining excellent schools.

Our nation's leaders recognize the power of parents. However, the limited capacity of parents and state-, district-, and school-level personnel to partner with each other and share the responsibility of improving student performance factors heavily into the relatively poor execution and oversight of the Title I parent provisions. (Mapp 2011, Title I and Parent Involvement: Lessons from the Past, Recommendations for the Future)

Engaging Families in Student Learning

The "curriculum of the home"—the bundle of attitudes, habits, knowledge, and skills that children acquire through their relationship with their family and that fa-

cilitates their school learning—is more predictive of academic learning than the family's socioeconomic status (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Redding, 2000). In his meta-analysis, Jeynes (2002) found the nuances of parent-child communication regarding expectations to be a particularly powerful source of motivation for minority children and children living in poverty. These children especially benefit from visions of what is possible for them beyond the circumstances in which they find themselves at the time, and their parents contribute both to that vision and to the children's confidence that they can reach out and attain it (Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).

Research shows that schools can improve their students' learning by engaging parents in ways that directly relate to their children's academic progress, maintaining a consistent message of what is expected of parents, and reaching parents directly, personally, and with a trusting approach (Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, & Walberg, 2005; Redding, 2000). These echo the conclusions of Swap (1993) that effective parent engagement must be comprehensive in nature, with the school consistently interfacing with parents at many points, in many venues, over the course of the schooling years. This is vital for all students at all grade levels, in all settings.

Learning Compacts

Strong schools require groups of parents who are committed to student success. For many of these parents, the transformation from parent to volunteer and advocate begins with Project Appleseed's Parental Involvement Pledge learning compact. The pledge asks parents to donate five hours to public schools each semester and 15 minutes per night to reading, homework, or enrichment activities.

Data from the Prospects Study of Student Outcomes (1998) provide evidence that when compacts are effectively implemented, positive, stu-





Principals' Views on the Helpfulness of Title I School-Parent Compacts, by School Poverty Level

	Highest-Poverty (75-100%)		Low-Poverty (0-34%)	
	Helpful (includes very helpful)	Very Helpful	Helpful (includes very helpful)	Very Helpful
Homework completion	85	33	64	25
Parents helping with learning at home	84	21	67	24
School climate	89	42	63	31
Student discipline	82	38	61	26
Reading at home	81	35	68	32
Student attendance	80	38	61	28
Teacher-parent relations	78	37	70	32
Student preparedness for school	77	30	53	20
Parent volunteers	76	30	42	17

Source: Heid and Webber, School-Level Implementation of Standards-Based Reform: Findings from the Follow-up Public School Survey on Education Reform, 1999

dent outcomes, including higher achievement, result. Schools with compacts were compared with non-compact schools on parental involvement and student achievement. Schools with compacts had higher levels of family involvement in those activities in which parents worked directly with their own children. These activities included parents' monitoring of homework and reading with their children. The study concluded that, after controlling for other factors, positive student outcomes found in compact schools were associated with the greater involvement of parents in supporting their own children's learning. Other activities, such as volunteering and decision making, may be valuable in their own right but were not shown to significantly affect learning (National Assessment of Title I, 1999, Source: Heid and Webber, 1999.). The study found:

- In the highest-poverty schools, 85 percent of principals found Title I compacts helpful in supporting homework completion.
- About 8 out of 10 principals in high-poverty Title I schools rated compacts as helpful, as did a majority of principals in low-poverty schools.

The Parental Involvement Pledge encourages school volunteering. The Independent Sector announces that the 2011 estimate, of the value of volunteer time, provides one way to measure the impact millions of individuals make with each hour they donate to make a difference.

If family volunteer service were calculated into the school budget at \$21.79 an hour*, based on the average teacher pay in America, then 100 family volunteers who take the Parental Involvement Pledge will generate at least \$22,000.00 of volunteer service for their school each year! The Parental Involvement Toolbox has the cost effective, research-based tools, like our learning compact called the Parental Involvement Pledge.

Use the Parental Involvement Pledge and supersize your school's parent engagement. Project Appleseed's Parental Involvement Toolbox is designed for educators and parent leaders who strive to increase family engagement. The Toolbox is aligned with the Six Slices of Parental Involvement. By purchasing the Toolbox, your schools can organize parent responsibility with an effective researched based program - that meets district and state mandates and best practices.

Parental involvement is a centerpiece of high performing schools and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Project Appleseed worked with the White House and helped pioneer the original parental involvement provisions in the 1990's. Title I defines the term "parental involvement" as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.

What Is A Volunteer Worth?

\$21.79
Per Hour

The Parental Involvement Toolbox

Project Appleseed's Parental Involvement Toolbox is the point of enrollment that schools take to become involved in the Capacity Building Partnership. It is designed for educators and parent leaders who strive to increase family engagement. The Toolbox is aligned with the Six Types of Parental Involvement. Schools organize parent responsibility with an effective, researched-based program that meets district and state mandates and best practices.



Parental involvement is a centerpiece of high-performing schools and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Project Appleseed worked with the Clinton White House and helped pioneer the original parental involvement provisions in Section 1118 of Title I in the 1994. Title I defines the term "parental involvement" as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.

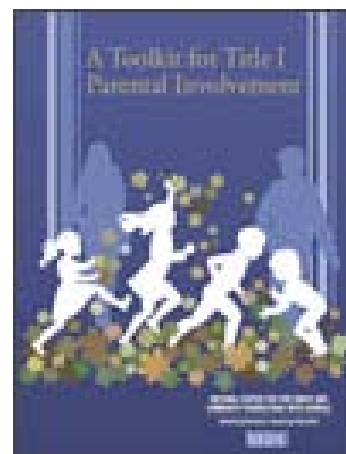
By using these tools, schools increase the number of family members involved in schools and enhance the "transparency" for parental involvement in children's education.

The Toolbox contains these two parent compacts:

- **The Parental Involvement Pledge** - Project Appleseed's Title I learning compact, the most widely employed learning compact in the nation, is branded with each school's name and school logo, for distribution to every student and family.
- **Fitness and Nutrition Parental Involvement Pledge** - A family wellness compact to support children's participation in physical activities and healthy eating, to be an active role model, and to include healthy eating and physical activity in family events.

- **The Parental Involvement Report Card** - This is a self diagnostic tool for distribution to every parent, grandparent, and caring adult. Branded with each school's name and school logo, the Report Card quizzes parents with questions based on standards found the Six Types of Parental Involvement developed by Epstein.

- **The Toolkit for Title I Parental Involvement from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)** The Toolbox provides the most recent research with detailed explanations of the Title I, Part A parental involvement provisions as well as 33 tools to assist state departments of education, districts, and schools in meeting these requirements. Both the explanations and the tools are designed to help educators increase parental involvement and provide opportunities for parents to engage in and support their children's academic achievement. The toolkit includes information on the following topics:



- Policy, Planning, and Building Capacity
- Communication, Notification, Reporting, and Information Sharing
- Parent Rights and Options
- Meaningful Involvement and Decision Making
- Fund Allocation

- **Parent Engagement: Strategies For Involving Parents In School Health from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** - This publication defines and describes parent engagement and identifies specific strategies and actions that schools can take to increase parent engagement in schools' health promotion activities. The audiences for this publication include school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and others interested in promoting parent engagement. Each of these audiences has different but important roles and responsibilities related to garnering support for, and implementing, these strategies and actions.





ProjectAppleseed

Kyrene de las Lomas School Parental Involvement[™] Pledge

AS A PARENT, GRANDPARENT OR CARING ADULT, I hereby give my pledge of commitment to help our community's children achieve a truly independent future. My declaration of responsibility and commitment to my public schools is stated in these five self-evident truths as spoken by President Woodrow Wilson:

- As an American, I am an owner of the public school system;
- That as an owner, I bear a responsibility to participate in the system
- That accountability for my public schools, their safety, and its employees and its funding rests with me and the rest of the system's owners;
- That my child's future depends on the improvement of public education;
- And that this improvement depends on my participation;



THEREFORE AS A PARENT, GRANDPARENT OR CARING ADULT, I take personal responsibility for my child's safety and education and the safety and education of children in this community.

- I pledge to volunteer a minimum of five hours of my time to my public schools each semester.
- I pledge to spend a minimum of fifteen minutes each school night reading with my child or we will work together on homework and enrichment activities.

This is my commitment to _____ and our public schools.

Student Signature

Parent, Grandparent, or Caring Adult
Signature

Step 1

Parent, Grandparent, or Caring Adult
Signature

Cut And Keep This Top Half And Post It On Your Refrigerator Door As A Reminder.

To Volunteer Return This Half To Your School Today!

Step 2

**I have pledged to take personal responsibility for my child's education.
I can volunteer a minimum of five hours each semester:**

☐ During School ☐ After School ☐ Evenings ☐ Weekend

(If you would like to volunteer and don't have any children in our schools please write "Does Not Apply" in the child section below.)

Name: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Postal Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____ Sch. District: _____

Phone Number #1 () _____ Phone Number #2 () _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Child's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Fall 2014-15

The Six Slices of Parental Involvement

Adapted From the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning

Goal



SLICE 1 - PARENTING

- Help all families establish home environments to support learning.

Effective Practices

- School provides suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level.
- School provides workshops, videotapes, and computerized phone messages on parenting and child-rearing at each grade level.

Goal



SLICE 2 - COMMUNICATING

- Design more effective forms of communication to reach parents.

Effective Practices

- Teachers conduct conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.
- Parent pick-up of report cards.
- Folders of student work are sent home and reviewed, parental comments returned to teacher.

Goal



SLICE 3 VOLUNTEERING

- Recruit and organize parent help and support

Effective Practices

- Distribute the Parental Involvement Pledge to recruit, increase and organize parent volunteers.
- Use the Parental Involvement Pledge to inventory parent volunteer needs.
- Set up parent center where volunteers can meet and where resources for parents are located.
- Send out annual postcard survey to identify all available talents.

Goal



SLICE 4 - LEARNING AT HOME

- Provide ideas to parents on how to help child at home.

Effective Practices

- Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
- Information on homework policies and how to monitor, and discuss schoolwork at home.
- Distribute calendar listing possible topics for discussion in the home.

Goal



SLICE 5 - DECISION MAKING

- Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Effective Practices

- Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, school advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform.
- District level councils and committees for community involvement.

Goal



SLICE 6 - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Effective Practices

- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support and other programs or services.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT DAY AND PUBLIC SCHOOL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Cut and post the **TOP** portion on your refrigerator door as a daily reminder for you and your

INVENTORY OF VOLUNTEER INTERESTS

Volunteer for one or more of the tasks below by checking the box. Then return this portion of the Pledge to your school. Keep the top portion and post it on your refrigerator door as a daily reminder for you and your children.

I am interested in volunteering in the classroom, I'd like to:

- ☐ 1. Tutor a student
- ☐ 2. Work with individual students.
- ☐ 3. Work with small groups of students.
- ☐ 4. Listen to students read
- ☐ 5. Translate for students.
Language: _____
- ☐ 6. Help with teacher's clerical work.
- ☐ 7. Prepare materials
- ☐ 8. Attend field trips
- ☐ 9. Help students with dramatic performances, special events
- ☐ 10. Help out in class with art projects, science experiments, etc.
- ☐ 11. Appear as a guest speaker to:
 - ☐ Share my professional experience
 - ☐ Share my travels
 - ☐ Share my culture
 - ☐ Share a talent, skill or craft

I am interested in volunteering in other areas. I'd like to:

- ☐ 12. Organize or help with school security (bus, school grounds, etc.)
- ☐ 13. Building maintenance
- ☐ 14. Carpentry
- ☐ 15. Gardening or yard work
- ☐ 16. Work in school library
- ☐ 17. Photograph school activities
- ☐ 18. Videotape school activities
- ☐ 19. Provide transportation to parents for: conferences, events, etc.
- ☐ 20. Type or do clerical work
- ☐ 21. Prepare newsletters
- ☐ 22. Prepare posters, displays, etc.
- ☐ 23. Do copying and laminating
- ☐ 24. I am interested in working with children on computers and supervising children while they surf the World Wide Web on the Internet.

I am interested in helping by working at home. I'd like to:

- ☐ 25. Recruit parents, citizens and local businesses to participate in special reading programs for students.
- ☐ 26. Call parents, organize phone trees for attendance and special projects
- ☐ 27. Enter data on a computer
- ☐ 28. Gather resource materials
- ☐ 29. Sew
- ☐ 30. Provide snacks
- ☐ 31. Correct papers
- ☐ 32. Cut out letters
- ☐ 33. Prepare bulletin boards
- ☐ 34. Stuff envelopes
- ☐ 35. Distribute brochures door-to-door
- ☐ 36. Become a block home
- ☐ 37. I am interested in improving our schools by working with other parents on projects and issues concerning our schools.

What is parent engagement in school?

Parents play a significant role in supporting their children's health and learning, guiding their children successfully through school processes, and advocating for their children and for the effectiveness of schools. Parent engagement in schools is defined as parents and schools working together to enhance and improve the development of children and adolescents. Parent engagement in schools is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways, and parents are committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development. This relationship between schools and parents cuts across and reinforces children's health and learning in the multiple settings—at home, in school, in out-of-school programs, and in the community.

How were these strategies developed?

The strategies and actions recommended in this publication are based on a synthesis of parent engagement and involvement research and guidance from the fields of education, health, psychology, and sociology. Materials in the review include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, reports from government agencies and nongovernmental organizations, and Web sites. Information from these sources was summarized to identify parent engagement practices in school that demonstrated an impact on students' academic and health behaviors. In addition, recommendations were informed by the opinions of expert researchers, public health practitioners, and educators at the Parents as Partners: Strengthening Parent/Family Involvement in School Health Policy and Practice meeting hosted by the National School Boards Association in 2008. This process identified evidence-based strategies and specific actions that can be taken to increase parent engagement in school health activities.

Only a limited number of studies have evaluated the impact of parent engagement on health outcomes. Therefore, many of the actions suggested in this publication are recommended on the basis of a single study of interventions that implemented multiple actions simultaneously, and it is difficult to isolate which components of the overall intervention contributed to observed positive changes in behavior and outcomes. However, actions were included only if experts from CDC and the panel of advisors for this project believed there was a logical connection between the action

and parent engagement; the action was consistent with recognized standards of practice and feasible for most schools to implement; and the action was considered highly unlikely to be harmful to students.

What Is the Pledge Worth?

\$217.00

Per Parent or Cargiver
Minimum School Value

The Six Slices of Parental Involvement



Project Appleseed is based on Epstein's (1995) typology of family involvement in education. This typology has become the standard in the field and appears in various adaptations, including Project Appleseed's Six Slices of Parental Involvement and the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships from the national PTA (n.d.). A comprehensive family-school partnership (which Epstein defines as an ongoing relationship rather than a program or event) addresses all Six types of family involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

Slice 1 - VOLUNTEERING

GOAL: Recruit and organize parent help and support

Slice 2 - PARENTING

GOAL: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Slice 3 - COMMUNICATING

GOAL: Design more effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications with all families each year about school programs and their children's progress.

Slice 4 - LEARNING AT HOME

GOAL: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curricular-related activities, decisions, and planning.

Slice 5 - DECISION MAKING

GOAL: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

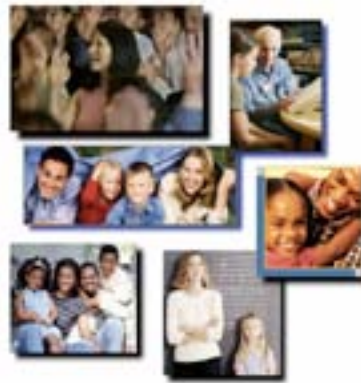
Slice 6- COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

GOAL: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

In the News



The Six Slices of Parental Involvement™



National Parental Involvement Day Focuses On Improving Internet Access

Project Appleseed is calling on parents and schools to identify families in need of free or low-cost Internet connections and computers and assist them in registering for the national program

By Karla Scoon Reid on November 19, 2013

National Parental Involvement Day, on Nov. 21, will highlight a new partnership that aims to provide low-income families with free or discounted Internet access, computers, and training to enable parents to communicate more effectively with their children's teachers and schools.

Project Appleseed, the St. Louis-based nonprofit and founder of National Parental Involvement Day, has joined forces with Connect2Compete, a partnership of IT companies and nonprofits that connect low-income Americans to the Internet. Connect2Compete is a nonprofit organization supported by Comcast, Cox, Freedom Pop, Arrow Electronics and CDI Computer Dealers. It receives financial support from the Knight Foundation, Carlos Slim Foundation, the Wasserman Foundation, Citi, and Microsoft. Read more about Connect2Compete [here](#).

Kevin S. Walker, the president of Project Appleseed, found a quote he gave a publication in 1994 where he boldly predicted: "Cyberspace would tie America's parent constituency together."

Walker added in an interview last week: "It hasn't worked that way."

Instead, he said poor parents have been left out as schools have adopted technology to improve parent engagement efforts, including accessing students' grades online and communicating with teachers via email. Walker said technology also is an essential tool to recruit and organize parents. Using social media and email to connect parents to a school or to rally around a cause can quickly bolster participation.

And teachers in higher-level courses are using technology more frequently in their lessons and to communicate with their students. According to a February poll of Advanced Placement and National Writing Project teachers conducted by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project:



Karla Scoon Reid is a writer who has covered education reform nationwide, including urban school issues. As the mother of two elementary students in California, she knows the vital role parents play in shaping the future of America's

- 79 percent of teachers have students access assignments online
- 85 percent of teachers seek opportunities to incorporate digital tools into their instruction

In recognition of National Parental Involvement Day, Project Appleseed is calling on parents and schools to identify families in need of free or low-cost Internet connections and computers and assist them in registering for the national program. Connect2Compete hopes to reach 100 million Americans who do not have home broadband Internet access. About 70 percent of American adults have high-speed broadband access at home, according to a May poll conducted by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project.

Unlike the federal government's problem-plagued health-insurance website, finding out if a family qualifies for this program is simple, just click [here](#) to start. (I tried it.)

For those doubters out there who can't fathom that there are people who don't know how to use a computer or don't have access to one, simply visit a local school. My boys are in elementary school and I've had super tech-savvy teachers who text me during the school day and send photos of my children to me via email. Then, I've had others who disavow email entirely and still cut and paste—with glue and tape, not a computer mouse—their homework newsletters. True story.

Still don't believe me? Watch how nervous and elated this first-time computer user is in this public service announcement from the Ad Council:



CDC, Project Appleseed Join to Engage Parents

St. Louis, MO. - **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Project Appleseed have joined together in releasing resources and hosting events for parent engagement in school health.** The release is in conjunction with the **18th annual National Parental Involvement Day**, November 15, 2012. The publication, **Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health**, is a comprehensive guide that will be provided as a free tool in Project Appleseed's Parental Involvement Toolbox. The Toolbox and its Parental Involvement Pledge compacts, for both school improvement and school health, is the point of enrollment schools take to increase parent engagement community-wide.



"There are roughly 150 days between National Parental Involvement Day in November and Public School Volunteer Week in April. We are providing schools with 26 weeks of activities they can use to engage parents. Beginning on November 9th, our Parental Involvement Toolbox will provide schools with a vital family and community engagement program for both school improvement & school health that is systemic, integratable and sustainable," said Project Appleseed founder and President **Kevin Walker** in St. Louis.

Children and adolescents are establishing patterns of behavior that affect both their current and future health. Young people are at risk for engaging in tobacco, alcohol, or other drug use, participating in violence or gang activities, and initiating sex at an early age. However, a growing body of research demonstrates that parental involvement in the lives of children and adolescents can help them avoid behaviors that place them at risk for adverse health and educational outcomes.

On Tuesday November 9th, Project Appleseed will join the **CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH)** in rolling out several key resources for parent engagement in school health. These vital resources will be released thru a new CDC parent engagement web page that will be linked to Project Appleseed's Fitness and Nutrition web site.

The web release will includes:

- Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health
- Overview brochure for parent engagement in school health
- Fact sheets on promoting parent engagement in school health for —
- District and school administrators
- Teachers and other school staff
- Parents
- PowerPoint® slides for promoting parent engagement in school health
- Facilitator's guide for staff development on promoting parent engagement in school health

Project Appleseed has joined DASH to promote a parental involvement webinar & Twitter Chat:

- Wednesday, November 14, 2012 - Prior to National Parental Involvement Day, the CDC will host a webinar to discuss how parent engagement in school health positively influences the health of children and adolescents. The webinar on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. EST, will feature **Dr. Joyce Epstein, Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University**, will provide an overview of high quality programs for school, family, and community partnerships. **Dr. Shannon Michael**, adolescent health researcher at the CDC, will describe how parent engagement in schools positively impacts adolescent education and health outcomes, and will identify evidence-based strategies and actions for engaging parents in school health. The session will end with an in-depth overview of CDC's newly released resources for parent engagement in school health. For registration information go to: <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/876242102>



- National Parental Involvement Day, Thursday, November 15, 2012 - The CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, will host a CDC Twitter Chat, Getting Parents Engaged in School Health, Thursday, November 15, 2012, 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. EST. Join **Dr. Kevin Fenton**, Director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, and subject matter experts **Dr. Shannon Michael**, adolescent health researcher in CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health and **Dr. Patricia Diffus**, behavioral scientist in CDC's Division of STD Prevention, for an interactive Twitter Chat to share and discuss evidence-based strategies and actions for engaging parents in school health. On Twitter Follow #HealthyYouthChat

Project Appleseed Grows Parent Involvement

On National Parental Involvement Day, Kevin Walker, founder of Project Appleseed, advises schools not to lament the lack of parental involvement, but to invite parents to do more.

"The school is a critically important community institution, since the quality of education shapes not only our children's individual future, but also the future of our economy, community, and society," says Kevin Walker. "Support of public schools is important; involvement and action by several parents in a group can influence school policy-makers and result in decisions and choices than can benefit many children."

Walker serves as the president and national director of Project Appleseed, the organization he founded as a nonprofit resource and advocate for families engaged in education. National Parental Involvement Day, held on the third Thursday of each November, was started by Project Appleseed in 1994. Walker suggests that one of the most important activities schools can employ in observance of the special day this year is to celebrate reading as a fun, school- and community-wide activity.

"Recruit parents, families, churches, and local businesses to participate in a special reading program for students and families," he advises. "Hold storytelling nights, guest author and poetry readings, read-aloud programs, dramatic readings, book fairs and book drives, a read-a-thon or a book report festival, family literacy nights, or other literacy activities for the whole community."

One of Project Appleseed's primary tools is the Parental Involvement Pledge, which asks parents to take responsibility for the education of their children through a commitment to help with homework and volunteer at school for at least five hours per semester. Some schools use the occasion of National Parental Involvement Day to introduce the pledge to parents and to rally volunteers.

"The pledge is especially effective because it systemically measures and targets parental involvement, while building valuable social capital," Walker explains. "The pledge entices parents to come to school for volunteering, parenting, academics, communication, safety, decision making, performances and more. It can create billions of hours of volunteer service in America's public schools."

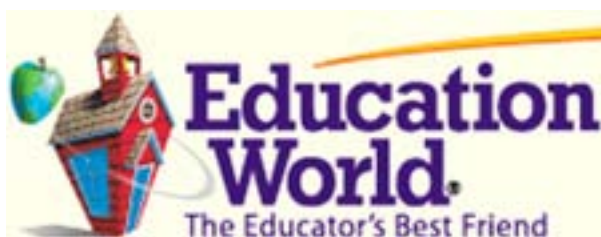
Walker reports that there are more than 55 million public school parents in America, and he firmly believes that real education reform cannot take place without an effective parent constituency. If Americans do not make systematic efforts to address how to get parents back into the schools, he warns, they will likely face an uphill battle with some very unpleasant long-term consequences for the country.

"Many schools simply fail to ask parents to become partners in the education of students," Walker told Education World. "Schools fail to set expectations for meaningful and measurable parental involvement. They treat parental involvement as an afterthought. Principals and teachers should ask parents on the first day of school to commit to a minimum number of volunteer hours inside and outside school."

Purposeful Pledge

"Traditionally, across the country, there is a significant drop from the number of parent volunteers at the elementary level to the number of parent volunteers at the junior-high/middle-school level," Nicole Cicci Kazarian observes. "Parents are somewhat reluctant to volunteer at the junior-high level, but not at Abington Junior High School. Since the introduction of Project Appleseed, the commitment of families at the junior-high level has been remarkable."

Prior to Project Appleseed, parental involvement at Abington Junior High School in Pennsylvania was typical for a large, suburban junior-high school and was limited to active PTO members. Parents wanted to volunteer, but the role of parent involvement was not defined. Project Appleseed brought greater clarity to volunteer activities and became a vehicle for organizing volunteer opportunities. Today, team members at the school aren't shy about asking parents to be a force in their children's education.



Abington Junior High School in Pennsylvania, started out with 77 parent volunteers in its database; the number grew to 187 the next year. The school currently has approximately 250 volunteers, about 15 percent of the parent population. The large database enables Kazarian to fulfill nearly all requests for parent helpers.

Since the 2008-2009 school year, Project Appleseed's resources have been utilized to encourage parents to get involved. Faculty members have reviewed the resources and revised the templates to fit the needs of the school. Each summer, parents receive a mailing that contains the Project Appleseed Parental Involvement Report Card, Parental Involvement Pledge, and Mission Statement, which includes accomplishments of the previous school year.

"Parents are asked to fill out the pledge and return the form to me," explains Kazarian, a Spanish teacher and project leader. "I then enter all the information into our database. The PTO and members of the faculty supply me with requests for parent volunteers. They provide me with details of the activities that require parent volunteers -- type of activity, time, date, and so on. I then send the volunteer request to the parent volunteers via email. If a parent is interested in volunteering, he or she contacts me or the adult running the activity."

Abington Junior High School started out with 77 parent volunteers in its database; the number grew to 187 the next year. The school currently has approximately 250 volunteers, about 15 percent of the parent population. The large database enables Kazarian

to fulfill nearly all requests for parent helpers.

"Parents are more than willing to donate their time to help out with school activities," Kazarian reports. "When a parent volunteer request is sent out, the responses are numerous. We sometimes have to kindly decline the volunteer services of some parents due to overwhelming interest."

Through the school's pledge, parents can express interest in 31 types of activities. Volunteers often work in the school store, tutor in the learning center, help during activities associated with the school-wide positive behavior supports program, organize fundraisers, decorate hallways, and assist in classrooms. There are opportunities to assist during school, after school, in the evening, and on weekends. The variety of times meets the needs of parents who have less flexible schedules. Several parents volunteer as much as 65 hours per school year.

"I think it's important to step back and take a look at the school environment," suggests Kazarian. "Tailor the Project Appleseed Parental Involvement Pledge to suit the specific needs of the school. Our school has revised its pledge annually. It is also important to include administrators, teachers, and parents in the discussion, for all parties can bring insight to the table."

Editorial: Community progress starts with parents

For those of us who live in the southern half of Dallas, it can be bewildering just getting up and going to work or school each day. We can pass blocks of underdeveloped properties, apartments overrun with grifters and schools that struggle to keep their kids from dropping out. The problems are so large you're left with an exasperated feeling about what on earth could I, one person, do to fix these woes?

Maybe Mr. Developer can. Or perhaps the Slum Lord across town can do something. Or even the Superintendent. But me? What can I do?

Honestly, that's a normal reaction. Few of us have the ability, bucks or following to fix large systemic problems.

But that doesn't mean we can't do something. In fact, if we don't do something ourselves, the problems won't get fixed. It all starts with what Martin Luther King Jr. talked about: Lighting a candle in the midst of struggle.

There are many ways to go about creating a spark, but the most natural place to



start is in our own homes, with our own children. It doesn't take a developer to help our young ones. Or even a superintendent. It starts with each of us as parents.

By being an active force in our children's lives, which means getting them up and to school, watching who they hang around with in the neighborhood and circling back each night to check up on their homework, we can give our children a running shot at making it in this world, where the way to get ahead is to have a good education that teaches you how to solve problems, master sophisticated technologies and understand different cultures. Community liaisons

Many parents understand the importance of parental involvement. On parent nights at Sunset High School in North Oak Cliff, you are likely to see 100 mothers and fathers sitting in one of the cramped auditorium chairs. They know that, in between their two jobs or raising their younger kids, they must follow their vulnerable ninth- or 10th-grader so he or she doesn't fall between the cracks. And, if those parents aren't there on their own volition, they've shown up because Nora Garcia has called them.

She's Sunset's community liaison. That's a fancy-sounding term for the parent recruiter at Sunset. Garcia is the lady who dials up parents, sends home notices and walks the blocks to make sure mom and dad know that the next school activity is coming up.

She's like Brenda Landeros at nearby Rosemont Elementary, Angel Jourdan at Felix Botello Elementary, or name any community liaison who gets parents to attend the school play, ride the bus for a field trip or meet with the principal.

Of course, teachers do some of this, too. They alert parents about teacher conference nights. They counsel families about struggling learners. And they greet parents when they drop their child off or pick them up.

But community liaisons are key because they are the designated hitters of parent outreach. If a school doesn't have one, or their duties are split too widely, they're not likely to reach that mom or dad who doesn't see the note sent home. When they do their jobs right, the liaisons have parents showing up at the right time, for the right meeting, at the right place.

Unfortunately, there's not enough money around for every school south of the Trinity - or elsewhere, for that matter - to have a community liaison that has the sole duty of recruiting mom and dad.

In the coming months, this newspaper will keep calling upon our local members of Congress, senators, state legislators, governor and even president to find the money for these key players. We know the economy has tightened budgets. But money invested in these jobs, whether from federal Title I funding or state general revenue dollars, could lead to more parents lighting lights. Parenting programs

We also think it's time that Austin stepped up with more money for solid parenting programs, such as Avance. Based out of San Antonio, Avance operates in several southern Dallas schools, including Gabe Allen Charter School in West Dallas and Urban Park Elementary in Pleasant Grove.

Project Appleseed's Public School Volunteer Week starts tomorrow, with an emphasis on parents taking a pledge to get - and stay - involved with their child's education. We hope this week sparks a conversation at DISD headquarters about how the district can create its own pledge for parents to sign so they will remain committed to their child's academic progress.

The national campaign employs numerous outreach efforts, all of which are aimed at equipping parents to become the primary teacher in their children's lives. Avance even runs one-on-one programs in a parent's home.

The Legislature previously has put some money into this proven effort. As lawmakers prepare for a cash-strapped 2011 session, Avance and similar outreach programs belong higher on the agenda. It won't take hundreds of millions to make a difference with them. Best practices

The Dallas school district has numerous parenting initiatives, including an exciting new online effort for parents to track their child's progress. It eventually will roll out in all schools, but it is starting with three campuses, two of which are in the southern half of the city: Annie Webb Blanton Elementary in Pleasant Grove and Roosevelt High School in East Oak Cliff.

The idea grew out of an investment in Dallas schools by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and its goal is to give parents a chance to use computers to know precisely how their child is doing in a subject, learn about their assignments and be able to easily contact their teacher.

There's nothing wrong with casting a big net, so Superintendent Michael Hinojosa and school trustees should keep scouring other districts for best practices. The Memphis district, for example, has launched a Cradle to Career effort. It is aimed at parents nurturing their children from birth, getting them to study 10,000 hours over the next 10 years and creating expectations for college.

This week also provides the chance for parents in the southern half of the city - as well as the rest of Dallas - to get involved with their child's learning. **Project Appleseed's Public School Volunteer Week starts tomorrow, with an emphasis on parents taking a pledge to get - and stay - involved with their child's education. We hope this week sparks a conversation at DISD headquarters about how the district can create its own pledge for parents to sign so they will remain committed to their child's academic progress.**

Over the next few months, we will continue writing about parents and their responsibilities. There's plenty that Congress, the Legislature and the school district can do to spur this on. But progress starts with mothers and fathers doing their part, whether that's something as mundane as getting their child to school on time or helping them fill out a college aid form. It may take a developer to put new buildings on a piece of property, like Mark Cuban is wonderfully planning for East Oak Cliff. But change really starts at home, one spark at a time. Dallas Morning News, April 2010

NBC & Project Appleseed

New school years are chock-full of optimism and opportunity. For teachers and students at seven (7) schools featured in the new NBC series "School Pride," the year started off in newly remodeled classrooms outfitted with modern learning technologies from Promethean. NBC is highlighting Project Appleseed as a national resource for schools. Find out how you can help Project Appleseed, a place where they understand that it takes a village to help our schools excel. To get the best results from your parental involvement efforts, we want you and your schools to join our movement to plant the seeds of school improvement in your local schools with National Parental Involvement Day and Public School Volunteer Week!



Tennessee Governors Embrace Project Appleseed

NASHVILLE (AP/CBS NEWS) - The Tennessee Department of Education is encouraging all parents and guardians take an active role in their child's education. November 18th, 2010 marked Project Appleseed's 17th annual National Parental Involvement Day. In recognition, Tennessee is promoting new Parental Involvement Standards - which mirror Project Appleseed's Six Slices of Parental Involvement.



Missouri and many other states share these standards. Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen says more frequent participation from parents both at home and in the classroom is needed.

"Parent involvement is a critical part of achieving a high quality education system and helps ensure student achievement," said Governor Bredesen. "It is important that parents and educators form strong partnerships that will result in higher achievement of students."

Tennessee Education Commissioner Bruce Opie says more needs to be expected from parents and guardians and not just students. He said in a statement that active parents can influence policies, practices and programs that support expanded learning opportunities.

Opie released the comment in conjunction with the 17th annual National Parental Involvement Day sponsored by Project Appleseed. He said Tennessee can successfully rise to the top only with the help of parents. Gov. Phil Bredesen said it's important that parents and educators form strong partnerships that will result in higher student achievement.

November, 2010



Pledge promises school volunteering, reading

By Cathy Spaulding, Phoenix Staff Writer, Muskogee, OK

Peggy Willard is an old pro when it comes to volunteering at her grandkids' school, Harris-Jobe Elementary.

"I always try to be hired as a monitor for the testing period they have here in the spring, and I always try to be involved in other functions," she said.

Willard put that involvement in writing Thursday when she joined her granddaughters at a Thanksgiving luncheon and parental involvement program at Harris-Jobe on National Parent Involvement Day. Muskogee public schools used Thanksgiving lunches as a way to encourage more parents, grandparents and others to get involved with their children's education.

MPS Parent Involvement Coordinator Kathleen Harris said parents attending the lunches were encouraged to sign a Parent Involvement Pledge. The pledge committed signers to volunteer at least five hours of time at their children's school and to spend at least 15 minutes each school night reading or working with their children.

Harris said she received good feedback from some of the schools.

"From some schools we talked to, we've gotten some new volunteers," she said.

Harris said in a media release that the Parent Involvement Pledge "is the most widely distributed learning compact in the United States."

"Organizers hope the one-day focus will help parents realize the importance of spending quality time with their children each day," she said. "They believe it will benefit the child, the parent, the school and the community."

The pledge is a program of Project Appleseed, a national educational resource for parents and families. The three purposes of Project Appleseed are to increase student achievement, strengthen fitness and nutrition and enhance the learning environment.

Willard signed her pledge in front of her granddaughters, Kerrigan Medlock, 9, and Baylor Medlock, 6.

Six-year-old Sarah Beaver's parents also signed the pledge.

"This will be a first for us," said Twana Beaver, the mother. "I want to be more involved in her school, and it will encourage her more, too."

Nov., 2009, MuskogeePhoenix.com



Volunteers are priceless to kids and teachers

Wendy Burton, Phoenix Staff Writer, Muskogee, OK

— Shirley Statler is a Muskogee grandmother who has volunteered a great deal of her time squeezed into pixie-sized chairs at Sadler Elementary.

She's graded papers, run fundraisers, separated shoes for the school play and many other simple tasks, but the work she does with children is what truly motivates her.

"Sometimes you touch a child's life," Statler said. "I really believe that when we give our time to a child, they'll always remember it."

Statler's been part of the Sadler Parent Teacher Organization. But it's only part of her volunteerism. She devotes many hours to the classroom each week as well.

She's read books with struggling readers, helped study spelling words and sat with an unruly child or two over the years.

"Even if you're up there taking an hour's worth of menial work away from the teacher, the teacher has time to concentrate on the important things like teaching," she said.

She also believes children bloom under the attention they receive from adult volunteers.

When her oldest grandson was young he felt like having Grandma around gave him some bragging rights, Statler said.

Everyone knew her at her grandson's school, from teachers to students, and he liked it.

That good feeling doesn't always last though, she said.

"When kids get up in junior high they think, 'Oh gosh, here comes Grandma'," Statler said. "But you keep doing it because you know there's work that the teachers need to get done."

Janie Wester, mother of twins entering Muskogee's 7th & 8th Grade Center, doesn't count the cost of volunteering either.

She's president of the PTO and spent her children's elementary years substitute teaching, working in the office and doing anything she could to help, she said.

It's always good to be a familiar face at school, Wester said, and she believes it's important to help teachers as much as possible too.

"If you're going to take the time to be there for you own kids, and other kids get to know you, it shows that you care," she said.

Those tasks that volunteers like Statler and Wester perform can equal benefits to school children in dollar amounts, according to Project Appleseed, a national campaign to get adult volunteers into the classroom.

Nationwide, if every public school student had at least one family member volunteer 10 hours, the minimum dollar benefit to children and schools would be \$17 billion in volunteer capacity.

That's more than the \$14 billion Congress approved in Title I stimulus funds, Project Appleseed says.

Reach Wendy Burton at 684-2926 or wburton@muskogee phoenix.com. July 2010, MuskogeePhoenix.com, Muskogee, OK



School board sets up improvement plan for year

Editorial

— The Muskogee Public Schools Board unanimously approved the 2010-2011 improvement plan at the most recent board meeting.

The plan sets out guidelines for continuing existing goals and setting new goals for students, teachers, administrators and parental involvement.

New items include the Science, Technology, English and Math Plan that will be taught to students pre-K through 12th grades.

That plan includes STEM training for students during an upcoming summer program.

Additionally, the school set a goal to provide interventionists at all sites for students who can't attend before or after school.

Reaching that goal will mean students who fall behind get extra help and support during school hours.

The Muskogee Public Schools district goals are:

- Teaching and learning: Developing curriculum maps, implementing a literacy and writing plan for all grades, implementing a Numeracy and STEM Plan, quality learning experiences focusing on rigor, relevance and relationships and building capacity of teachers and administrators in PLCs.
- Interventions: Use data effectively to make decisions, close achievement gaps among all subgroups, implement anti-bullying strategies and student advocacy, extend instructional time through tutoring.
- Accountability/Recognition: Review data, implement plan to monitor and support administration, support and monitoring for teachers, recognizing achievements and contributions at all levels.
- Professional development: Staff training in scientifically research based literacy and mathematical skills, differentiated instruction, multicultural teaching strategies and advocacy strategies.
- Parent involvement: Implement Title I Project Appleseed, assist families with parenting skills, communication with families, improve volunteerism through recruitment and training, and include families as participants in school decisions. December 19, 2010

December 2010, MuskogeePhoenix.com, Muskogee, OK

A Johnny Appleseed for the Schools

Three years ago, Olive Chase was surfing the Internet when she stumbled onto Project Appleseed's website and clicked on its Parental Involvement Pledge.

"As parents, we are the owners of the public school system," the pledge read. "As owners, we bear a responsibility to participate in the system." The form asked the signer to promise to volunteer a minimum of ten hours in her child's school each year.

Chase, a council member at her son's Cape Cod elementary school, had been trying to get more parents involved. The council passed around the pledge and 200 of the school's 350 families signed on.

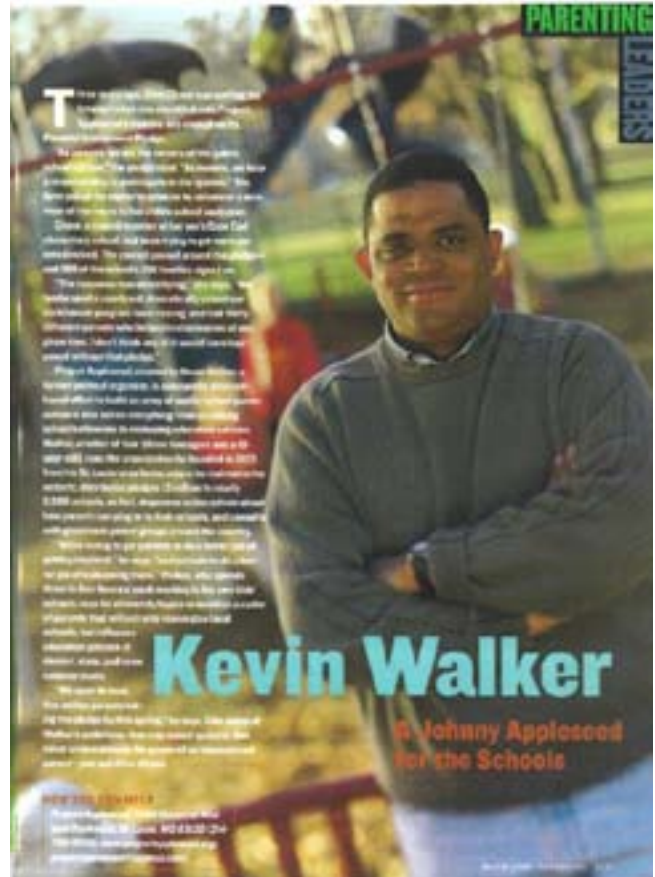
"The response was electrifying," she says. "We landscaped a courtyard, dramatically raised our enrichment-program fund-raising, and had thirty different parents who helped in classrooms at any given time. I don't think any of it would have happened without that pledge."

Project Appleseed, created by Kevin Walker, a former political organizer, is a nonprofit, Internet-based effort to build an army of public-school parent activists who will do everything from scrubbing school bathrooms to reshaping education policies. Walker a father of four (three teenagers and a 10 year old), runs the organization he founded in 1993 from his St. Louis-area home. Today the organization maintains a highly ranked website, distributes pledges (3,500 schools so far), dispenses on-line advice about how parents can plug in to their schools, and helps educators with grassroots parent groups around the country.

"We're trying to get parents to do a better job of getting involved," he says, "and schools to do a better job of welcoming them." Walker, who used to spend three to four hours a week working in his own kids' schools (they are now grown), says Project Appleseed is mobilizing a cadre of parents that reenergize local schools and influence education policies at district, state and even national levels.

"We want to have 50 million parents taking the pledge," he says. Like many of Walker's ambitions, that may sound quixotic. But never underestimate the power of an impassioned parent - just ask Olive Chase.

How You Can Help: Project Appleseed, 520 Melville Ave, St. Louis, MO. 63130, Website: www.projectappleseed.org, E-mail: headquarters@projectappleseed.org.



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