

WHY PARENT COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT **BOOST STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**



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The secret to student achievement may lay largely outside of the classroom. Research has shown that parent engagement can contribute as much to student achievement as study habits, test-taking abilities, and school attendance.

Parent engagement comes in various forms which often include:



Volunteering at in-school and after school events



Participating in parent teacher associations



Attending parent-teacher conferences and school meetings



Regularly communicating with teachers and administrators



In a recent study, researchers at the Harvard Family Research Project performed a meta-analysis examining over **77** studies on parental involvement and student achievement. With over **300,000** student achievement scores reviewed, spread across **36 secondary schools** and **25 elementary schools**, the results were quite telling.

Student success was measurably higher with parent involvement, in a variety of areas, such as:^{1, 2}

- Standardized test scores
- Grade point averages
- Enrollment in higher-level, advanced classes
- School attendance rates
- Graduation rates
- Improved social skills with peers



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Even more eye-opening is that these improved academic performance results were seen across racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.³

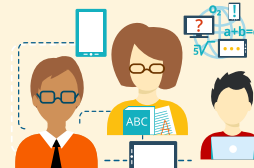
Despite the research backing the role of parental involvement and higher student achievement, some schools continue to struggle to communicate with and engage parents. Researchers with National Education Association have found that the school structure and focus on communication with parents play an important role in determining the levels of parental involvement within the school.⁴



As a result, schools can take an active role in motivating and engaging parents to be more active in their child's education. With mobile technology readily available such as Embr mobile app.

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Parent-focused school programs like Families and School Together (FAST) are cropping up around the Nation. These programs are designed to enhance students' academic growth by building lasting relationships between parents and teachers to re-engage the family in school activities. When schools engage families in ways that improve learning and support parent involvement at home and school, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to parent concerns, respect their input, and share in decision-making responsibilities, they are able to establish productive connections that are aimed at improving student achievement.⁵



Merging the principles of FAST with the latest in mobile technology, schools can take their parental communication and involvement to the next level.

Here are the three effective ways schools can connect with, engage, and encourage parents to take an active role in the school community.



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01

ENABLE REAL-TIME COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

Having open and clear lines of communication between parents and teachers is key to parental engagement and involvement. In fact, providing parents with access to student progress reports and encouraging open dialogues around ways to improve the child's academic achievement were found in a National Education Association study to boost academic development. There often is a disconnect in the amount and frequency of communication teachers provide and what parents expect. A full 93% of teachers believe that parents are given ample opportunity to offer

input into and participate in school events and activities. However, over 25% of parents say that they feel excluded from the collaborative process and school activities.⁶ Having a mobile application or a centralized information sharing platform can make it easier for teachers to communicate with parents, and for parents on-the-go to receive these communications in real-time. Sharing information about after school events can be done through the same portal and is an easy, and often effective way, to increase parental participation.



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02

PROVIDE PARENTS WITH INFORMATION REGARDING CLASSROOM TOPICS AND ASSESSMENTS

Psychological and educational research supports parent involvement with homework. Studies have found that for children that may struggle in the classroom, having one-on-one parent engagement and help during homework times can help greatly.⁷ However, parents cannot adequately help with homework or studying for assessments if they are not kept informed of the content, teacher expectations, and due dates. Having an educational mobile application, like a mobile app for your own school with Embr can provide an accessible

platform for parents to view upcoming assignments and assessments, as well as view graded or missing assignments.

Creating interactive homework assignments that encourage (or require) parental help can be an effective way to engage parents outside of the classroom. According to the Center for Public Education, teachers who involve parents regularly in school work saw a marked increase in student scores, across several subject areas, including Science and Writing.⁸



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03

CREATE PARENTAL ROLES WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Parents are not only a great resource for boosting student achievement, but they can also be ideal partners in the school community. A recent University of New Hampshire study found that in order to achieve the same results that are gained with parent involvement, schools would have to increase per-student spending by more than \$1,000.⁹ Having parent driven roles in the PTA, booster clubs, or similar organizations are an effective way in getting parents involved in the school community. The key is creating varying levels of participation

to meet even the busiest parents' schedule. Parents have attributed their lack of involvement to not knowing where they "fit in" to the larger school community. Others say that they are not invited, on a consistent basis, to participate in activities and are unaware of how to get involved.¹⁰ Sharing information about volunteer opportunities and also communicating the importance of parental involvement is key in re-engaging parents that may feel disconnected from the school community.



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