
Planning Suggestions: The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)

Parent Academy for Student Success #1 Student Learning with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Support for Districts and Schools:

A Suggested Planning Process for Implementation of the Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) Model

Prior to implementing the PASS model, educators may want to consider a new definition of home/school partnerships. PASS is not a program planned *for* parents; rather it is an instructional strategy shared *with* parents.

Instructional strategies are typically understood as an interaction between teachers and students. However, the assumption is limiting because it restricts the benefits of “wrap-around” support that all students need to make significant academic gains. Instructional strategies are designed to engage students in learning, help activate students' curiosity about a class topic, probe critical thinking skills, keep students on task, engender sustained and useful classroom interaction, and, in general, to enable and enhance their learning of course content. The purpose of the suggested PASS model is to build academic partnerships between home and school, where instructional strategies are shared and teaching and learning are enhanced.

Below are some key concepts and new ways of planning that are specifically designed to model a dramatic change in traditional home/school partnerships.

The sole purpose of the PASS model is to engage in highly focused, authentic partnerships that will drive student learning and success.

The fundamental steps below are recommendations, not a prescription, for creating a purposeful shift in home/school partnerships that are clearly focused on student learning. Effective PASS implementation requires a new dialogue and a commitment from every stakeholder group in the education community. Therefore, the suggested steps below should include superintendents, board of education members, principals, supervisors, and all classroom teachers.

TOP 10 and A-Z PLAN THE STEPS TO SUCCESS

Step One - Assess potential

Step Two - Invest

Step Three - Articulate mission, vision, and goals

Step Four - Develop objectives and strategies

Step Five - Motivate

Step Six - Prepare

Step Seven - Complete the plan

Step Eight - Collect Feedback

Step Nine - Engage stakeholder leaders in the application of feedback

Step Ten - Plan for the next PASS event

1. Assess potential

- a) Traditional and nontraditional leaders within the school community search for data that links parent involvement activities to academic achievement. Utilize the evidence to conduct an authentic conversation about the direct impact that current activities have on student performance.
- b) Stakeholder leaders review and discuss the suggested PASS model.

2. Invest

- c) Gain investment from superintendent, members of the board of education, principals, teachers, parents and families, students, and other leaders in the education community.
- d) Overview of plans presented to the board of education. The board approves and places Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) events on the official school calendar.
- e) District leaders hold open meetings to share their commitment with staff and discuss implementation of the PASS model.

3. Articulate mission, vision, and goals

- f) Identify the mission and goal(s) unique to each district/school and clearly align them with data, climate, and culture of the education community. Identify unique and priority issues.

4. Develop objectives and strategies

- g) Identify a common definition for the PASS in each unique education community.
- h) Utilize PASS documents for guidance and a new perspective on home/school academic partnerships.
- i) Make a distinction between PASS academic content and other parent involvement activities, such as fundraising, attendance at student performances, volunteering, etc. (PASS events are solely about student achievement.)

5. Motivate

- j) Among individuals planning the PASS implementation, discuss past results of current and former parent involvement activities.
 - o Identify how the past activity directly affected student achievement.
 - o Identify patterns for at-risk students.
 - o Summarize data from above discussions.
- k) Combine the school's unique data with the PASS document titled Mission, Justification, and Goals from the PASS Toolkit. Share the information with stakeholder leaders to build a new vision and obtain buy-in.

6. Prepare

- l) Use the PASS overview materials to redefine meaningful parent and family involvement and specifically identify previous barriers that relate to parent support for student learning. Some considerations might be: one-way communication with parents, limited parent representation in key decision-making, inconsistent communication styles, the climate and culture of schools, lack of culturally responsive classrooms, staffing issues, etc. Breaking down barriers to improvements are markers of a great school and doing so prior to PASS will improve successful outcomes.
- m) Plan strategies to address potential barriers to PASS.

7. Implement the plan

- n) Develop a draft agenda that will motivate, yet not overwhelm parents; too much, too fast is not digestible. Do not blend PASS events with other more traditional family involvement activities. Keep the agenda topics clearly focused on two-way academic communication about teaching and learning. (This narrow focus may keep attendance low for the first few meetings; however, once students' results become clear, PASS will gain parents' respect and motivation to support their own child.) Ensure that topics, speakers, data, and materials address opportunities for home/school/student support. The agenda must reflect a well-coordinated, thoughtful, and positive tone that clearly indicates a commitment to a different method of parent and family involvement in their child's academic support.
- o) Utilize the NJDOE RESOURCE PACKET.
 - o Review the entire toolkit with an eye to utilizing home/school partnerships as an instructional strategy that supports student learning. (Refer to the comments in number four above on home/school academic partnerships as an instructional strategy.)
 - o Review and consideration of materials and handouts will take time. They must reflect a different tone of partnership and may best be addressed by a team.

- Add/eliminate language in the PASS materials to meet the needs of the education community.
 - Translate handouts in languages that respond to individual community needs.
 - Place the school logo or name on the packet cover and documents if individualization is desired.
- p) In Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), grade bands, or content-specific teams, teachers review the PASS model, build instructional strategies, and identify activities that can support students' understanding of the transfer between classroom learning and its application to "real-world" opportunities. Strategies should not be limited to content-based homework assistance. They should be differentiated and serve to enrich and strengthen learning skills.
- q) Consider offering the PASS event at two different times to meet the needs and schedules of parents. Reserve space, design the room set-up, identify breakout locations, arrange light refreshments for the final Q&A session, and perform other required logistics.
- r) Refer to the recommended agenda for the general session with parents, the key talking points and other tools to develop a school specific agenda. Consider inclusion of student leaders in demonstrations and academic activities where they can provide examples of new teaching, learning, and personal assessment methods for their own success.
- s) Send home invitations, the PASS overview, agenda, justification, facts on how the new academic partnerships can help each child's learning, and other handouts, as appropriate.
- t) Identify a school link where materials will be available. Place the information on district/school web pages and initiate automated phone message systems.
- u) In consideration of transient families, post information at convenience stores, gas stations, churches/synagogues/mosques and other key community locations.
- v) **At the Academy:**
- Prepare hand-outs, as appropriate. If it is not possible to provide hard copies of handouts, use PowerPoint presentations and tell parents how to find the documents on the school webpage. (Priority - Include the "Glossary", "Frequently Asked Questions", and "Resource" sections for all parents.)
 - Use the guide or team created agenda and provide suggested handouts.
 - After the keynote sessions, break parents into age-appropriate 20-minute sessions: ELA, math and learning across the curriculum. In breakout sessions, teachers provide 10-15-minute overviews and Q&A.

At the end of the Academy:

- Escort parents back to the initial room. Offer refreshments and provide them with appropriate summary documents from the toolkit.
- Hold "Table Talk" conversations where parents discuss and write what they learned on large paper.
- Facilitate the report out.
- Explain that PASS is one way that parents and teachers can work together to help children learn successfully in their best way.
- Invite parents to ask *general* questions that apply to all students. Place answers in an FAQ on the website. Build that document to include additional questions and answers as they arise.
- Give parents information on the next steps that your district/school will take to partner with them on their child's learning. Commit to follow up on their feedback and ideas.
- Have teachers at tables around the room to answer *individual* questions.

8. Gather feedback from all participants

- w) Use a survey and encourage follow-up conversations with classroom teachers and the principal.

9. Engage stakeholders

- x) Follow up with a thank you note to all attendees.
- y) Invite PASS #1 attendees to take part in a working group to review feedback and ensure that it is included in development of the next PASS.

10. Plan for the next PASS event

- z) Use feedback and student achievement data to motivate members of the district/school community to participate in the next PASS. Develop a suggested, sustainable framework that strengthens the communication, partnerships, and conversations surrounding new expectations of teaching and learning.

By building authentic academic partnerships, educators, parents, and families will support student learning both in and out of school.