

# Changing your Mind Set of Parental Involvement

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## **Background That Led to Your Inquiry:**

Each year, the leadership team at Rome City Elementary wonder how can we build more parent engagement. We wonder, if we get our parents more involved, will we have better academic achievement and will behavior improve? Parents do not attend our parent meetings, they do not read or response to information we send home, they often to not volunteer to participate in functions, homework is not completed by students. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to find a way to get parents involved in their child's educational lives and build a team approach to academic success.

## **Statement of Your Wondering:**

With this purpose, I wondered, how are we going to get parental involvement within Rome City Elementary School? Why are parents not participating?

## **Methods/Procedures:**

To gain insights into my wondering, I first met with the school leadership team to generate ideas for parental involvement. The leadership team brain stormed ideas such as more home visits, bilingual communication, surveying parents, and to pitch a "Shark Tank" idea to the school board for funding for parent nights. I also met with the Parent Action Committee to ask the more involved parents what their ideas were.

With the ideas generated, I began to organize and structure events around the staff and parents suggestions. I collected data of parental involvement through, the flyers sent home, parents signing in to the school, visiting with parents at lunch, and observing more parents attending various events.

I collected the data until the end of March. As I analyzed the data, I reflected on pictures, dates and timelines and events that were held, but also the amount of parental flow into the building.

## **Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:**

As a result of analyzing my data I learned 3 key important details. First, I learned that parents do want to be involved. Parents want to be involved, but do not always have a flexible schedule to be involved. Each parent is different and each way a parent finds ways to be involved are different. Parental involvement does not have to mean that parents are in the building all of the time. Parents can be involved through emails, DoJo, SeeSaw, eating lunch, taking field trips etc. Next, I learned, that parents who do not speaking English want to me involved and do care about their child's education. Breaking down the walls for them to fell comfortable and welcome into the building is a huge hurdle we overcame this year! Lastly, parents believe do believe our staff has the best interest in mind when sending their child to us each and every day.

Again, data collected was through various different forms. Pictures, sign in sheets, phone logs, parents responses through DoJo and SeeSaw. More parents were visible in the building, yet more and more parents were signing in to social media pieces to comment and show support.

### **Providing Concluding Thoughts:**

Throughout the action research cycle, as an administrator, I have learned a few things. The biggest lesson I have learned through action research, is that I have to change the mind set of my staff of what parent involvement really is. Parental involvement does not mean the parent has to be visibly present. There are other ways parents can be involved with their child's education other than being visibly present. Parents can be involved through email, social sites, signing papers, helping with homework etc. The next lesson I learned, was to embrace all of the cultures that walk through the building. All parents want what is best for their child/children. Depending on the culture and their language ability, parents may struggle to help their child. It is our job as educators to not only help the children feel welcome, but to help support the parents with their child's education as well. We need to breakdown the cultural and language barriers to work with parents, so the children know we all want them to be successful together. If we do not educate the parents, then we will struggle to educate the students.

As as school administrator, I need to encourage and model for staff how to get through barriers we have. Parental involvement was a barrier my staff felt we had. Changing mind set and reflecting on our definition of parental involvement helps us realize we have grown in the area of parental involvement. Although we have grown, we will continue to try to reach all parents in some form.

### **References:**

Mahalingappa, L. (2017). Supporting Muslim Students. S.I. Rowman & Littlefield.