

How Can I Increase Parental Involvement?

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

Rome City Elementary is a Title I school with many English as a Second Language students. With our high free and reduce rate and our large number of English Language Learners, parent involvement was extremely low. Staff and administrator struggled to gain parental involvement. Therefore, how do we as staff, make parents feel more welcome and want to be apart of their child/children's education.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered how can I get more parents to feel more comfortable at school and want to come into the building to be apart of their child's learning.

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insight into my wondering, I met with the school leadership team to generate ideas to get more parents involved. The leadership team brain stormed ideas such as, more home visits, bilingual phone calls, surveying parents for what they need, meet with the Parent Action Team, and simply call random parents. We also decided to pitch a "Shark Tank Idea" to our school board, for financial support to host family nights. To gain more better understanding of the Arabic population we have, as a staff we read the book, Supporting Muslim Students. As we learned more about the Arabic population, it was clear to us, we need to hold Arabic family nights and allow them to share their culture with us.

Data collection happened in many forms. First we received an award from the Mosque to show their appreciation in wanting to learn about their culture. Next, Arabic mom begin invite us to a Culture night, they created for us. Then we started to see more Arabic moms attending events and coming into school. More parents began to sign in for lunch and want to go on trips.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned that parent involvement is easier than what I thought and that the my mind set and my staffs mindset of what parents involvement is needs to change. These two things honestly go hand in hand with each other. First, parental involvement is easier than I originally thought. Parents do want to be with their child/children and want to learn more about what is happening at school. How parents are involved just may be different.

This leads to the second result of the data, the mind set. I found that in my mind set and my staffs mind set, parental involvement meant seeing parents all of the time, having homework done, parents coming to all of the invents. But the truth is parental involvement comes in many forms. Parents can be involvement through email, phone calls, eating lunch at school, donating items, coming to a performance. Parental involvement, does not mean they have to attend each and every function.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

As I reflect on my action research, I think back at how much parental involvement has grown this past year. Being willing to allow parents to share their culture with the school and allowing families to participate from a distance instead of just physically is a huge part of success. Moving forward, staff need to be open minded about the different ways parents can be involved. We all work jobs and can not physically be present at every single event. We need to respect our parents and know they are the same way.

In the future, I want to continue to reach out to parents in different ways. The more we make them feel welcome, the more they will want to participate, not matter form of participation that may be

References:

Mahalingappa, L. (2017). Supporting Muslim Students. A Guide to Understanding the Diverse Issues of Today's Classrooms. Rowman & Littlefield.