
Communication

Curtis Bay Elementary School

Baltimore, Maryland

Curtis Bay Elementary School has been a part of the School, Family, Community Partnership Initiative for nine years. We feel the partnerships encouraged by this initiative are responsible, at least in part, for the academic improvement made by our students in the last few years. Curtis Bay has also seen an increase in students scoring at a satisfactory or better level on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program from 6.5% in 1993 to 44% in 1998.

We have always felt that communication with parents and members of the community is essential for their active involvement in the school. Staff members at the school send out monthly newsletters that contain a schedule of events, articles from each class in the school, a list of students with perfect attendance for the month, a list of students with birthdays during the month, and information especially for parents. Included with the newsletter is a copy of the Home/School connection. This handout provides parents with tips for helping their children with reading and math. At the end of the newsletter is a response form on which parents can list any comments or questions. If parents sign this form and return it to school, their children receive a pencil.

Since we feel that parents should be contacted on the first day of their children's absences from school, we invested in phones for each classroom. Teachers make phone calls to parents about attendance, achievement, and/or behavior. Attendance postcards and letters are sent to the home of students who don't have phones or who have been absent frequently.

Half-and-half letters are used occasionally when there are issues for which we would like our parents' opinions. At the beginning of the school year when we extended our school day by one half-hour, we used half-and-half letters. We stated the reasons why we wanted to extend the day, and we solicited the opinions of our stakeholders.

Since Curtis Bay Elementary School is a CORE Knowledge school, family projects are assigned monthly that correlate with the subject matter taught in the classroom. Many teachers give weekly homework assignments so that parents are aware of the entire week's assignment at the beginning of the week and can organize their time accordingly.

Teachers, students, parents and staff at Curtis Bay Elementary have enjoyed being part of the Partnership Network, and we are looking forward to continued involvement in the years to come.

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