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## **PARENT/FAMILY REPORT CARD PICK-UP NIGHT**

### **Collinwood Middle and High School**

### **Cleveland, Ohio**

Collinwood Middle and High School is an urban comprehensive school located in a residential and business community in Cleveland, Ohio. The school has an enrollment of approximately 1500 students in grades 9-12 and 400 students in grades 6-8. To align with the goals of the school's reform plan and to increase the number of parents coming to pick up students report cards, the Action Team redesigned report card pick up by making it more family and community friendly.

In the past, report card pick up was held from 2:45 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on a Monday with little notice to the parents and families. Hence, there was a very low turn out. Now, report card pick-up is 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on a Thursday. The new time better accommodates families' work schedules.

The Action Team tried to create a more welcoming and supportive climate during report card pick-up. They wanted to offer more information to parents to help them help their children improve academically. The Action Team Chair asked the high school guidance counselors to provide an information table with homeroom information, schedule of students' classes, help with scheduling parent-teacher conferences, and information on night school, summer programs, postsecondary options, scholarships, and graduation requirements. The attendance liaison talked with families about excessive absences and the new state mandates regulating them. The School, Family, and Community Partnership Action Team set up a registration and information table to alert families to the many partnership program opportunities available throughout the year. To further develop a family-friendly environment, the school displayed a huge WELCOME PARENTS banner to greet parents as they entered the registration area. Families enjoyed refreshments provided by the school.

Improved communication strategies encouraged more parents and families to attend the report card pick up nights. The school's business partner, General Electric, provided postage for mailing flyers to students' homes announcing the event during the first year. During the second year, a state grant funded the postage. Students stuffed the envelopes as part of their daily service learning. An announcement in the local *Sun Scoop Journal*, the community newspaper, helped spread the word about report card pick-up nights.

The changes made to the parent/family report card pick up nights sparked something new at Collinwood Middle and High School. During the first year, the school had one report card pick-up night, and a total of 173 families signed in at their children's homerooms. This was a significant increase from before. In the second year, the school had three report card pick-up nights with an average of 150 recorded signatures at each event. Each of these nights had a different theme: an ELA Standards workshop; a community fair with a focus on energy programs; and a Family Art Walk. Some parents also took advantage of a workshop on hands-on math, science, and technology training being offered by Quality Education for Minorities through a grant from the National Science Foundation to increase the number of minority students entering careers in science.

Parents and families were very responsive to the environment. Families and staff engaged in conversations both in and out of the classrooms. Some students came with parents for the report card pick-up and in many cases got issues resolved immediately. A photographer captured some of the moments. With diligence, creativity, and flexibility, Collinwood Middle and High School's Action Team for Partnerships has established a partnership practice to foster two-way communication to benefit students' academic progress.

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