

## Folder for Family Support

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*Riverview Specialty School  
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota*

Everything you would want or need to know to about parenting can be found in the Partnership Action Team folder provided by the Riverview Partnership Action Team (RPAT). This weekly pocket folder is chock-full of information, ideas, and announcements for parents. The initiative was created in conjunction with the school's Second Step conflict resolution program.

Riverview staff decided that the inappropriate behavior of some of their students was detracting from instructional time. The RPAT decided to get parents involved by supporting their parenting skills and efforts, knowing that children are more disciplined learners when their home lives support them as students. In a survey conducted by the RPAT, Riverview parents had indicated that they were interested in receiving ideas for parenting at all ages and levels of development.

The RPAT instituted a weekly folder to create a consistent medium for school-parent communications. The parenting materials in the folder addressed the needs that parents had outlined in a survey conducted by RPAT. The program was designed to increase students' self-esteem and confidence, thus decreasing incidences of inappropriate behavior.

The first folder was sent home with a cover letter, RPAT brochure, Ideas for Parents flier, Parenting Book Club flier, Parent Resource Library information, and a parenting question of the month. The Ideas for Parents flier, which is distributed by the Search Institute's Healthy Communities—Healthy Youth initia-

tive, includes activities, discussion items, and practical tips for parents. The Parenting Book Club, which covers books on parenting, and the parenting question of the month invited parents to communicate and interact with each other and the school. The folder also provided a way to publicize school events and announcements. The school included the same information on its website for families and the community at large.

Since the beginning of the program, RPAT has received a lot of positive feedback, as well as suggestions for improvement. One change the team will implement is to reduce the amount of material in each weekly folder. Some parents felt overwhelmed by the number of papers they received. By simplifying the folder, RPAT intends to make it more user friendly for all families. RPAT hopes that as parents become used to this communication, they will respond and participate more regularly.

The Riverview folder initiative has successfully guided parents in supporting their children's education. Now, more students at this magnet school are learning in an environment that is as supportive at home as it is in the classroom. The district director of elementary curriculum really likes this project and shared, "What a wonderful idea and resource to provide for families. This idea could be easily replicated by other schools in the district."

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