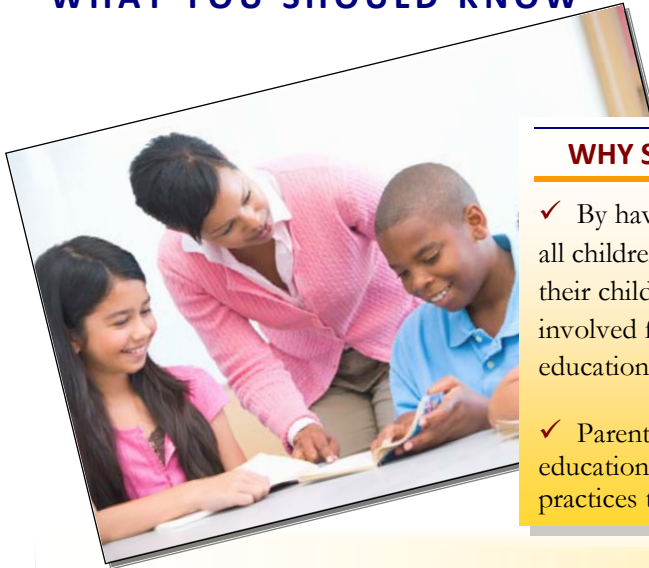


# Advocacy for All

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



### WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON ADVOCACY?

- ✓ By having parents advocate on their children and all children's behalf, we are ensuring that parents and their children have a voice in the process and are involved fully in important decision regarding their education.
- ✓ Parents can encourage accountability in the education system and influence programs and practices that benefit their children and all children.

## Parent Engagement *and* School Dropout Prevention

### WHAT IS PARENT ADVOCACY?

- ✓ Parents who speak or write in support or defense of their children and all children to improve opportunities for excellent education.
- ✓ Parents guiding their children through school knowing what programs are available and understanding how to navigate the system to access them.
- ✓ Parents speaking together with other parents and their children aspiring to articulate their needs and views to school personnel in an effective manner.

## HELPING PARENTS

### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- Create** a welcoming environment for parents.
- Solicit** comments and suggestions from parents in classrooms and the school as a whole.
- Discuss** with all parents the importance of their participation in their children's education.
- Invite** parents to serve on advisory councils and/or committees that are responsible for addressing everything from school safety, curriculum development, and textbook selection to disciplinary policies and dress codes.
- Communicate** regularly about children's progress, not just when problems arise.
- Encourage** parents to learn more about what their children are learning in school, what assessments are conducted during the year, how they can support their children's study habits, and what their schools district's graduation requirements are.

### WHAT COMMUNITY AGENCIES CAN DO

- Focus** programs to support parents as advocates for change and partners in school improvement as well as programs that support parents as helpers at home.
- Educate** and support parents with courses and training on specific topics (GED, college credit, family literacy) and general skills (effective communication, decision-making, negotiation, mediation) so they can support their children's education.
- Sponsor** workshops to improve parent knowledge of school policies, procedures, graduation requirements and post secondary school preparedness.
- Provide** activities that promote fellowship and leadership – parents building relationships with people like them will help with their own role construction and sense of efficacy.
- Recruit** parent leaders who are representative of the student population to attend conferences and trainings on education issues.

### WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Visit** the school regularly and reinforce in your child's mind that school and home are connected – it is an integral part of the whole family life.
- Familiarize** yourself with rules, procedures, and specific ways parents can be involved in the school.
- Know** your child's teachers. Tell them about your child and ask questions on how you can support what they are teaching.
- Communicate** with other parents about what works and what does not work; address concerns and approach the problem as a group.
- Include** yourself in school decisions and network with parent leaders, representatives and families through activities like the PTA, back to school nights, and school events- and stay active.
- Participate** in trainings and workshops to build your own leadership skills and deepen you knowledge of excellent schools and education programs.