


Profile: Parent/Community Partnerships

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Research confirms that parent/community partnerships are vital for vibrancy in school cultures. Here are three such partnerships that enhance the student experience.

You can hear the excitement in EVHS's Activities Director Joe Kostecka's voice as he talks about the Booster Club. Consisting primarily of parent volunteers at concession stands, the Booster Club hosts several activities for students, such as the annual Booster Club Auction (October 25), the "Spirit Game"—EVHS's "Gauntlet" match-up with rival Rogers (January 16), and the Senior All-Knighter. This dedicated group of parents is composed of several subgroups, like the Wrestling Boosters, the Band Boosters, Choir Boosters, Robotics Boosters, etc. Each group sponsors a myriad of activities for students. Funds for each of these subgroups come from concession stand sales. So, the next time you purchase a hotdog, remember: proceeds will eventually wind up in the hands of one of these Booster groups to fund a great activity for students! [Go Knights!](#) 

East Valley Middle School has landed a 21st Century grant. This grant has four goals, all with a focus on math. Two of these goals involve parent and community involvement. EVMS has created an after-school enrichment program that engages

students in a variety of hands-on, math-oriented, high-interest projects. Already the grant has attracted the attention of local businesses. One in particular, McKay Manufacturing, has partnered with EVMS in the interest of fostering practical knowledge, skills and interest in local employment opportunities. Parents, teachers, paraprofessionals and community members have planned enrichment activities that all have a focus on applied math skills: cooking, woodshop, plastics, metals, quilting, soda-making, media production and cake decorating. An extra benefit of this program is the strengthened link between the middle school and the high school's CTE program. In addition, EVMS has designed a selection of before and after school interventions for students who struggle with math. That's just the tip of the iceberg. Principal Mark

(continued on page 3)

"Almost every school that demonstrates academic success with [low socio-economic] populations . . . has succeeded through the support, involvement, and partnerships between schools, families, and the community."

-The Kids Left Behind

Special points of interest:

- **Profile:** Parent and Community Partnerships
- **Concept Shots:** Tips for Educators
- **Book Review:** *Results*
- **What's Coming Up:** Calendar of Events

District Improvement Team

East Valley School District has engaged in a district improvement process. In accord with several national studies that show that continual "reinvention" is key to districts' success, EVSD has convened a team of stakeholders to:

1. Become familiar with the district's mission (*EVSD will inspire all students to achieve academic excellence and to become responsible citizens*).
2. To review current achievement, perception and demographic data for the district.
3. To prioritize focus/goal areas for the district.
4. To help identify strategies for attaining these goals.

EVSD formed a Strategic Plan in the spring of 2006 that consisted of a mission statement, visions and goals in several areas. Today's district improvement team is not replacing this

plan with a new one; rather, it is building on and continuing the Strategic Plan. Richard DuFour, in *Professional Learning Communities at Work*, says "We must continually plan, monitor, and model the best behaviors and practices known. This will only happen if the [school improvement] process is cyclical, if it becomes internalized, if it is how we do business." The district improvement team is "doing business": continuing this process of persistent reinvention.

The Leadership Team consists of parent/community members, as well as EVSD staff: Stacy Aked, Carla Bagby, Jan Beauchamp, Nicole Bess, Paula Cavaness, Barbara Cruse, Ronnie Galeener-Wells, Diann Goodwater, Kathy Gordon, Ellen Hopkins, Theresa Kendall, Megan Lawler, Kerri Lunstroth, Maureen Lyden, Steve Pointer, Cari Roderick, John Savage, Suzanne Savall, Todd Slater, Mary Talley, Brian Wallace and Charlene Wellington.

Classroom “Rounds”

Last month, several administrators and teachers met with a panel of regional experts to learn more about “classroom walkthroughs”—a method for principals to support teachers by learning more about what happens in classrooms. This is effected by spending a few minutes on a frequent basis in each room.

The purpose is to support teachers by:

- Knowing what happens in the classroom.
- Becoming more knowledgeable in all content areas.
- Becoming more familiar with instructional strategies.

Principals adopted a “rounds” method: dropping into classrooms for a few minutes regularly, much like doctors do—checking in on all the rooms to see if there is anything they can do to help.

One of the panelists, Pete Hall, mentioned in his company’s latest newsletter that it’s not Programs that make a difference; it’s Teachers. And “rounds” enable principals to focus on the classroom. Using the focus of digital cameras as a metaphor, Mr. Hall remarks, *“Life, however, does not come with an auto-focus setting. And educational leadership certainly lacks that simplicity. Absent such a default setting, we’re left with one option: focus ourselves”* ([www. Education-hall.com](http://www.Education-hall.com)).



Mr. Rydell on rounds

Response to Intervention

Skyview and Trentwood: model RTI sites for WAI

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a relatively new term buzzing around in education circles—as well as EVSD—today. What is RTI?

Here’s what it’s not: It’s not a program, not a curriculum, not practiced solely by specialists, not something apart from the classroom, not a way to get more students into or out of Special Education, . . . and not an option.

It is a value.

It’s thinking that “RTI” stands for *Regardless, Teach Individuals*. It’s reflected in Red Robin’s slogan *“Will Customize Your Burger.”* We are the wait staff, and students are the customers. Research suggests that 80-85% of our customers will be well-served by our main menu, but that 15-20% need their burger cus-

tomized. ELL students, kids with learning disabilities or health issues—these are all kids who need extra pickles on their burger. This ability to well-serve most students with great curriculum and instruction (core programs), and to customize (intervention programs) for the rest of our customers is what makes us a powerful organization.

Schools across the nation are starting to look more carefully at student needs, creating menus of available interventions, implementing those interventions and monitoring the effectiveness of those interventions over time. This helps close the achievement gap and helps each student meet benchmark goals: now that’s a satisfied customer!

RTI: Fully implemented at a school near you soon.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

-Anne Frank

Concept Shots: Tips for Educators

Parent conferences are coming up! Here are some tips for well-handled conference time.

Start communicating with parents early in the year.

Allow plenty of time for the conference.

Prepare in advance to answer specific questions.

Greet parents at the door to help them feel welcome.

Avoid physical barriers.

Be specific in your comments.

Try not to use “educationese” with parents.

Ask for parents’ opinions.

Focus on the student’s strengths.

Use positive body language.

Summarize the discussion.

Keep a record of the conference.

-Tips from vtnea.org



Parent/Community Involvement (con't)

Purvine created a new parent volunteer organization. And more ideas are already being generated, like using Summer School to *pre-teach* math concepts in addition to the traditional “catch-up” focus. Way to go, EVMS!

The YMCA has worked for several years at the elementary schools. The YMCA at Trent Elementary offers a before and after school program, and many students participate in it. In fact, there is a wait list of students wanting to join. Many students arrive at school at 6:30 AM, and have “quiet time”—they read books with YMCA staff members or work on homework. Students are paid for doing their homework (fake money) and taught how to save and make good buying decisions. After school, the YMCA staff guides

students through a variety of gym games, including a “Running Club.” Once a month, students travel to the “Y” for a field trip, where they can swim and climb on the rock wall. There is even a Thanksgiving Day feast for families.

BJ Edwards is a college student and Site Director for the YMCA program at Trent Elementary. Ms. Edwards says that the YMCA program makes a difference in the lives of these students and their families. It provides a safe place for students while parents are working; it provides mentorship; it provides a way for students to share school experiences; and, perhaps most importantly, the YMCA program is a positive, “anchor” experience that students will draw encouragement from for many years.



Findings: Effective Science Programs in WA

RMC Research Corporation—in their paper *What Schools with a Record of Continuous Improvement Do to Improve Student Achievement on the Grade 5 Science WASL* (March 2007)—has identified six commonalities among elementary schools in Washington with strong Science scores.

1. All schools used inquiry-based instructional materials.
2. Most schools engaged students in some form of preparation for the science WASL.
3. Most schools indicated that teacher profes-

sional development contributed to rising scores. This development addressed journaling, leadership, science content and inquiry, the EALR's and GLE's.

4. These schools had a science advocate—one who was passionate about science and contributed energy and initiative to the school.
5. Half of the schools attributed their success to alignment of curriculum.
6. Some schools attributed their success to increased instructional time in science.

“One cannot live above the quality of his thoughts.”

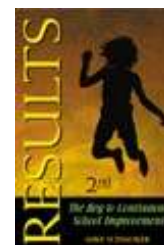
-Unknown

Book Review: Results

Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement, by Mike Schmoker (ASCD, 1999), outlines clear steps to fast gains.

- Be part of a **collaborative team**. Collaborations help teachers survive the crush of “presentism”—the myriad of daily events and duties that keep us from tackling the obvious and challenging concerns.
- Write **measurable goals**. Not like this: “Fully implement our math program”; but like this: “The percentage of low income students who are at standard in Math will raise from 43% to 59% by the end of the year.”

- Use **data to make instructional decisions**. Data simply determines whether or not students have learned what they have been taught.
- Impatience is a virtue! Strive for, and celebrate, **short-term results**.
- Constantly engage in **research**—important at the classroom level; critical at the district level.
- **Redefine “results.”** Instead of depending on annual assessments, use team-developed rubrics for common assignments. Give students examples of excellent performance.



We are on the web!

www.evsd.org



East Valley School District

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East Valley School District's Professional Development Team is a service organization that provides quality support to educators. Professional Development leads to increased student achievement. Quality professional development tends to be on-going, collaborative and research-based.



Providing quality support

What's Coming Up

Upcoming professional development activities include:

October 28	Microsoft Word	4-7 PM; PDC	December 3	Advanced Excel	4-7 PM; PDC
October 28	CBA's—3rd grade	AM; PDC	December 4	Grade 1 Math Standards	8:30-11:00; PDC
October 30	3-12 Writing Committee mtg.	8-11; Bd. Rm	December 4	Kindergarten Math Standards	12:45-3:15; PDC
October 30	K-2 Writing Committee mtg.	12:30-3:30 Bd. Rm.	December 8	K-5 Computer Lab Para Wkshp	4-6 PM; PDC
November 3	LETRS Foundations (#3)	3:30-6:30; Bd. Rm.	December 11	Health and Fitness class	EVHS
November 3-4	Why Try Training	EVMS	January 6	Health and Fitness class	EVHS
November 4	Microsoft Excel Basics	4-7 PM; PDC	January 12	LETRS Foundations (#4)	3:30-6:30; Bd. Rm.
November 6	Dyslexia Training	3:45-6:45; Trent	January 13	PowerPoint Workshop	4-7 PM; PDC
November 12	Internet Safety Mentors	PDC			
November 13	Librarian Web Pages	PDC			
November 14	7th Grade Math Assessments	PDC			
November 19-20	Right Response Training	Bd. Rm.			
November 24	Dyslexia Training	3-6; Trentwood			
December 1	Middle School Computer Lab	4-7; PDC			
December 2	Grade 5 Math Standards	8:30-11:30; PDC			
December 2	Grade 4 Math Standards	12:45-3:15; PDC			
December 3	Grade 3 Math Standards	8:30-11:00; PDC			
December 3	Grade 2 Math Standards	12:45-3:15; PDC			

Please verify dates and times with building principals, or by calling the district office (924-1830).

Each of these dates and more can be accessed on the district website, <http://www.evsd.org/classes.php>. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Steve Pointer at pointers@evsd.org. Thank you!

