

PASS 3: Strategies that Enrich and Expand Student Learning

Home/School Partnerships that Include  
Extended and Expanded Learning Opportunities

*The PASS model refers to the term "parent" as any adult who plays an important role in a child's family life.*

The state recognizes that parents and educators may have limited time to prepare and implement a comprehensive academic partnership program for their entire education community. In addition, there may be a dependence on traditional parent involvement efforts such as volunteering, fundraising, meeting attendance, passing school budgets, chaperoning field trips – all of which are already part of most school communities. Therefore, NJDOE offers the **Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)** model to redefine parent engagement in education and support the capacity of educators and families to implement systemic changes that focus on academics and home/school partners working together to improve student success.

The PASS model is grounded in the belief that when educators inform and engage parents about teaching and learning *inside* the classroom, parents can better support learning *outside* the classroom. When parents are engaged in student learning:

- Parents have opportunities to understand and discuss student learning expectations and ways that the learning is measured. In partnership with their child's teachers, they can develop strategies to best support learning outside of school. A half-century of research indicates that students achieve higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates; have easier transitions to the next grade level and better attendance: a stronger motivation to learn; and, higher success rates in college and careers. In addition, children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals work together to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the culture in school.
- Students take more responsibility for their own learning, show more curiosity and innovation, are more organized, show self-disciplined, regularly complete their homework assignments, have higher class participation rates, and have fewer suspensions for disciplinary reasons.
- Educators request knowledge and tools that help them support student learning by working with families in positive and meaningful ways to raise student achievement. Consistently, educators say that they are not sure how to develop powerful systemic home/school partnerships as a regular part of their practice and school structure.
- Business leaders expect to hire the most qualified employees from applicants across the state, the country, and the world. As young students "learn how to learn" they not only gain knowledge but they also build on their developmental and essential learning skills. As they enter middle and high school, students develop pre-employment proficiencies that prepare them for career and educational choices after graduation. When schools use dependable benchmarks directly aligned with high academic standards in each grade level, effective measurement of student's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and consistent achievement expectations, student outcomes provide a lens to hiring the "most qualified employee." We place younger students on the path, then support middle grade and high school students on their journey, and finally, congratulate graduates when they reach their destination to possess skills that will ensure that they are successful in college or their career.

PASS is an intentional, systemic means of increasing student academic achievement by improving the quality and quantity of parent-teacher communication and interaction.

The design of home/school partnerships to support student learning is not a luxury -- it is an integral component of student achievement. Currently, there are many changes and updates in teaching, learning, and student achievement expectations. When parents gain knowledge and understanding of academic requirements, and become clear about grade level learning expectations and measures, they can join with educators to set academic goals that support student learning and raise achievement. Parents *can* play a new and powerful role in ensuring that their child is successful.

The genesis of the New Jersey Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) model is the evidence, knowledge, and desire to provide home/school partnership opportunities that inform and engage parents in the “what,” the “how,” and the expectations for student learning.

Parents may not know how to align their out-of-school support with classroom learning and success in school. They want to know how to recognize whether their child is learning outside of school and how to communicate with professional educators about their child’s level of achievement. It is incumbent on educators to foster an environment where parents can feel comfortable to ask academic questions or provide feedback about their observations outside of school.

Teaching and learning in the classroom includes several opportunities that can be replicated at home and in other extended learning opportunities. Parents and teachers can collaborate to build learning goals and strategies that support students in the classroom and throughout their lives. Some examples of characteristics and skills that can lead to improved student learning and the development of essential learning skills are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Creativity and innovation</li> <li>• Critical thinking and problem solving</li> <li>• Support for English language learners</li> <li>• Enrichment and support for diverse learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect for individual differences</li> <li>• Exploration of multiple perspectives</li> <li>• Technology use in teaching and learning</li> <li>• Use of data to support learning</li> <li>• Academic engagement with families and communities</li> </ul>
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**Strong learning partnerships between parents and educators are one of the most effective strategies that improve student learning.**

Traditionally, low performing schools have weak or no academic partnership programs, and high performing schools have very active home/school relationships that focus on academics. Historically, educators’ plans for increasing student performance excluded academic partnerships with parents. However, while the depth of academic partnerships in the PASS model is new in many schools, those that try to help struggling students increase achievement may want to consider PASS implementation as part of their systemic turnaround strategies.

Educators	Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace parents as teaching and learning partners;</li> <li>• Spend time in Professional Learning Communities discussing productive ways to develop learning partnerships with parents;</li> <li>• Openly share with parents detailed information that impacts student learning and assessment results;</li> <li>• Partner with parents to build strategies that support student learning both inside and outside of school;</li> <li>• Invite parents to observe new teaching and learning techniques in open classrooms;</li> <li>• Make a sincere effort to understand and act on parents’ feedback; and</li> <li>• Ensure that these partnership practices become part of systemic efforts to improve student achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask teachers for more information about student learning standards and how the learning is measured;</li> <li>• Discuss with educators a new role for parents in student learning;</li> <li>• Participate in multiple opportunities to build strong student learning partnerships with educators;</li> <li>• Provide teachers with feedback from observing student learning and achievement outside of school;</li> <li>• Work with teachers to build academic strategies that extend learning opportunities outside of school;</li> <li>• Address teachers’ feedback about schoolwork;</li> <li>• Monitor formal and informal student achievement in and out of school; and</li> <li>• Discuss observations with the child.</li> </ul>

*The New Jersey Department of Education’s model for home/school partnerships – The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) provides documents and support tools intended to compliment information about the state’s academic standards and annual assessments for students. The PASS model provides resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to build home/school partnerships in the best interest of students’ academic success. For information on the NJDOE PASS model go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Send questions to: [informccss@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:informccss@doe.state.nj.us).*