

Action team

Building bridges between home and school by “The six types of involvement”: The Action Team as a first step directing to the programs of school, family, and community partnerships

Role-playing method

Joyce L. Epstein's action team idea appeared very useful in following activity that describes functioning of „cascade” in local communities, creating home-school-community bonds [Epstein, et al., 1997, pp. 13-17].

Main assumption presents the way of partnership's creation by increased parents' involvement in school practice, which allows obtaining a big extent of local community collaboration, etc.

“The action team should include at least three teachers from different grade levels, three parents with children in different grade levels, and at least one administrator. Teams may also include at least one member from the community at large and, at the middle and high school levels, at least two students from different grade levels. Others who are central to the school's work with families may also be included as members, such as a cafeteria worker, a school social worker, a counselor, or a school psychologist. Such diverse membership ensures that partnership activities will take into account the various needs, interests, and talents of teachers, parents, the school, and students.

The leader of the action team may be any member who has the respect of the other members and has good communication skills and understanding of the partnership approach. The leader or at least one member of the action team should also serve on the school council, school improvement team, or other such body, if one exists. In addition to group planning, members of the action team elect (or are assigned to act as) the chair of one of six subcommittees for each type of involvement. A team with at least six members (and perhaps as many as 12) ensures that responsibilities for leadership

can be delegated so that one person is not overburdened and so that work of the action team will continue even if members move or change schools or positions. Members may serve renewable terms of two to three years, with replacement of any who leave in the interim. Other thoughtful variations in assignments and activities may be created by small or large schools using this process [ibidem, pp.13-14]. The action team works to ensure that the six types of involvement are implemented in ways that help reach school goals for students, improve school climate, and engage families in their children education (...). It is important that members of the Action Team for School, Family, and Community Partnerships understand the team's tasks, roles, and responsibilities. It is also important that other staff and all parents and students know about the existence and work of the Action Team. Everyone needs to know what goals for improvement have been set, and that the school has a program of partnerships to help reach those goals. The Action Team can help disseminate this information, and involve all families and their communities in children's education at school, at home, and in many locations in the community” [ibidem, p.29]. About “Six Types of Involvement”... A framework of six major types of involvement has evolved from many studies and from many years of work by educators and families in elementary, middle, and high schools (...) Each type of involvement induces many different practices of partnership:

- Parenting: help all families establish home environments to support children and students
- Communicating: design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and their children's progress

- Volunteering: recruit and organize parent help and support
- Learning at home: provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning
- Decision Making: include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives
- Collaborating With Community: identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development [ibidem, pp.7-8].

STUDENT TASKS: To make a 6-people group and create The Action Team for School, Family, and Community Partnerships, playing the roles of school teachers, parents, adolescent students, and administrators.

To answer a question (individually): How will you make people involved being responsibility about one of the six types of involvement?

To answer a question (as the Action Team): How will you make school and local community well informed and engaged in your work?