

Parent Teacher Community Forum

Linking for Learning

AFTERNOON SESSION: 1:30 - 4:45

For school, district, parent, and community leaders. Participants are encouraged to come in teams from their school or district. The theme will be leveraging school improvement to promote best practices and authentic engagement.

Participants can choose one breakout session:

- **Workshop A – School-Parent Compacts: A Catalyst for Authentic School-Parent Cooperation and Partnerships for Learning**

Wouldn't it be great if the administrators and teachers at a school—particularly a school with many at-risk students—could sit down with parents and exchange ideas about what part each might play in supporting students' learning? Imagine if parents could hear directly from teachers what teachers believe their kids most need to learn, how teachers plan to structure that learning, and precisely what parents can do at home to reinforce it. What if teachers could hear each caregiver's view on what most helps his or her particular child? And what if this meaningful interaction could happen through an existing protocol, one that most schools now perceive as a burdensome requirement? Learn how to transform school-family compacts, which all Title I Schools are required to create, from boilerplate language into vehicles for collaboration.

Presenters: Judy Carson, Ph.D., Program Manager, School-Family-Community Partnerships, CT State Department of Education and Patti Avallone, Consultant to the CT State Department of Education for School-Family-Community Partnerships.

- **Workshop B – The ASPIRE Survey: Inventorying the Talents of Parent and Community Members**

This interactive workshop will offer participants the opportunity to experience an electronic, web-based survey designed to increase parent and community engagement in schools. By conducting an inventory of six factors: Assets, Skills, Professions, Interests, Relationships, and the Environment (ASPIRE), participants will learn to utilize them within a context that connects their value to the school's educational programs and activities. The identified "human capital data" collected through the ASPIRE Survey provides a searchable databank of resources and information for supporting schools by engaging parents and community members in meaningful and purposeful ways.

Presenters: Michele Femc-Bagwell, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education; Jocelyn Ault, CommPACT Parent Resource Center Coordinator, Bassick High School, Bridgeport, CT; Jennifer Delaney, Teacher/Parent Cadre Leader, West Side Middle School Waterbury; Jassie Myers, CommPACT Parent Resource Center Coordinator, West Side Middle School, Waterbury, CT.

- **Workshop C – Welcoming Schools: Creating Inviting Places for Teachers, Students, and Families**

When schools create a welcoming environment, they become inviting places where students feel safe and want to learn, school employees want to work, and families want to be involved. The welcoming walkthrough assessment is designed to examine four specific areas: the physical environment, school-wide practices and policies, staff attitude, and written materials. By using the Welcoming Walkthrough Tool Kit, participants learn how to assess the climate of their school and develop a plan to create a welcoming climate to engage families and the community.

To improve outcomes for all students, participants in this session will learn the value of family engagement in school climate issues, and will review the guidelines for conducting a welcoming walkthrough in their schools.

Presenter: Betsy LeBoriosis, Program Manager for Youth and Family Development, CREC.

EVENING SESSION: 5 - 7

For a general audience of stakeholders on the topic of how we can shift our thinking from traditional family engagement activities to high-impact strategies that boost student learning - and why our schools won't improve unless we do.