Professional Development Tools

- Improving Communication
- Promoting Positive Parenting
- Enhancing Student Learning
- Increasing Volunteerism
- Supporting Decision Making and Advocacy
- Collaborating with the Community

MODULES 1-6
Professional Development (PD) Overview

With a strong background in school, family and community partnerships, educators are better prepared to work with parents, family members and others in the community to help students succeed at higher levels.

School systems that recognize families and community members as essential partners for school success are committed to providing continuous professional development that places family involvement as a priority area to be addressed. The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE, 2003) suggests that all professional development support teaching that:

- develops language and literacy across the curriculum;
- connects school learning experiences to students’ language and culture;
- advances complex thinking;
- is standards-based;
- is collaborative;
- is thematic;
- is student-centered; and
- is based on ongoing discussion.

In addition, New Mexico upholds the expectation that professional development should:

- be aligned with the districts’ Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS);
- assist teachers in fulfilling requirements for the New Mexico Professional Development Dossier for licensure advancement; and
- address the rich diversity of its families.

Quality professional development results in more effective teaching strategies that lead to improved student learning and, in this case, improved family involvement. An evaluation process for professional development must provide on-going feedback to teachers in a collaborative atmosphere that is in-depth and multi-layered. The following is a partial list of methods that can be used to evaluate a participant’s use of new knowledge and skills.

- Direct Observations using Performance Continuums/Rubrics
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Personal Learning Logs and Reflective Journals
- Teacher Portfolios/Dossiers
- Peer Observations
- Coaching

Each of the Professional Development Modules in this Toolkit includes a Teacher Self-Assessment Rubric, Teacher Reflection Tool and other activities that can help facilitate identification of present practices, exchange of ideas, challenges and solutions, opportunities for reflection and plans for improvement for each of the six types of parental involvement.
Target Audience

*Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships* offers Professional Development Modules that can be facilitated by school or district administrators, principals, instructional coaches, school counselors, parent leaders or other designated training and technical assistance providers. The modules are designed to provide professional development for school administrators, teachers, parents and community members who want to learn more about the importance of school, family and community partnerships; how to work more effectively with all families; and how to assist and support the school’s parental involvement component of the *Educational Plan for Student Success* (EPSS). The modules also provide support and evidence of mastery required of teachers working on their Professional Development Plans or Dossiers. While the modules are intended for formal professional development sessions to be conducted among colleagues, they may be adapted for use as a self-tutorial.

Each professional development session can include families as partners; however, facilitators should be sensitive and aware that some modifications may be necessary to fully include diverse families in specific communities. Facilitators will find it helpful to review the modules closely prior to the sessions. Facilitators may add other topics and activities to the professional development sessions to address specific needs or interests of the participants.

Professional Development Modules

The Professional Development Modules are designed to provide participants with opportunities to understand the six types of parental involvement, meet challenges towards excellence and link partnership activities to results.

The *Professional Development Tools* will:

- provide PowerPoint presentations and activities for professional development focused on strengthening school-family-community partnerships;
- provide educators with workshop tools and resources aligned with the *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System*; and
- provide attendees with a common vocabulary, a common background and processes that enable educators, parents and others to work together to build partnership programs.

Each module includes:

- PowerPoint presentations in the forms of hard copy, CD and links to the web for use during professional development sessions;
- instructions for preparation including materials, equipment needed and length of time needed for each session;
- facilitation tips to help shape the presentations for effectiveness;
- facilitator notes that accompany the PowerPoint presentation to help structure and pace the presentation;
- presentations on key topics followed by small and large group activities for participants to explore how they can apply each topic to their school;
- handouts for use in activities that give participants opportunities to share ideas and information, to reflect on current practices and to plan for improvement;
- a Sign In Sheet for participants and an evaluation form to be completed by all participants after the session is completed; and
- *Certificates of Completion* to recognize and share progress in improving school, family and community partnerships.
Establish the Setting and Physical Conditions for Learning

- Schedule a half-day or several one hour sessions for each professional development module session; each session takes 3-4 hours.

- Select and plan for an Icebreaker Activity. Several suggestions follow that help participants see the results of working together as partners.

- Review and modify the activities, overall presentation design and materials to ensure that they match the needs of the participants.

- Arrange for a meeting room that is large enough to fit 4-6 people at each table comfortably, with the primary facilitator visible. It should also accommodate a LCD projector and arrangement so that all participants can see the screen.

- Arrange for equipment – LCD projector, laptop computer, Toolkit CD and extension cords. Test the equipment before the presentation and secure cords and wires for safety.

- Determine what materials are needed for each module. General supplies include: a flip chart easel, chart paper, masking tape, markers, loose-leaf or blank paper, pens, pencils and index cards.

- Copy enough handouts and Certificates of Completion included with each module.

- Use the CD to print out the PowerPoint handouts with three slides per page and space for notes.

- Provide refreshments and breaks as appropriate.

- Maintain good records of ideas generated and follow-up with participants’ ideas and suggestions.

- Reserve time for participants to debrief, complete evaluations and celebrate learning at the end of each module.

- Plan for distribution of Certificates of Completion. These may be modified to include school name and logo.
Icebreakers

Use the icebreaker activities most appropriate for your audience. Create opportunities for participants to experience “state changes” (experiencing something different), therefore making your presentation more brain friendly. These activities also provide opportunities for participants to work together as partners.

Think-Pair-Share

This is a great opener because it not only breaks the ice, but also models best practices for families, teachers and administrators. If families are present, tell them that this technique may be used in their child’s classroom. If teachers are participants, remind them that this is an effective instructional technique they might want to try. Administrators can use the experience to better recognize what to look for in classrooms.

THINK: Pose a question, a prompt or an observation related to the workshop material. Participants take a moment to THINK about the question.

PAIR: Ask participants to work with a partner and PAIR up to discuss their thoughts. Partners compare their mental or written notes and identify the answers they think are best, most convincing or unique.

SHARE: After participants have worked in pairs for a few moments, the facilitator calls for pairs to SHARE their thoughts with the rest of the group. This can occur by going in a round-robin fashion, calling on each pair or random answers from volunteers. The information can be recorded on an overhead, board or chart paper for future reference.

Energetic Energizer

Write each separate word (or phrase, depending on the group size) in the following sentence on 13 sheets of brightly colored paper and wad each paper up: *If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.*

Proceed with the following steps:

- Throw the wadded pieces of paper (paper balls) out to the participants.
- The participants continue to throw the paper balls to another person.
- Keep throwing the paper balls until the facilitator says “stop”.
- Participants caught with a paper ball go to the front of the room.
- The participants have 3 minutes to arrange the words in order to form the sentence stated above.
- Follow up with a short discussion about the significance of this statement as it relates to improving partnerships with families and communities.

Name Game

Each person will introduce themselves with a word that describes him/herself. The descriptive word should contain the same letter as their first name. This exercise allows participants to see each other in a new light.

Another variation is to introduce another participant. However, to make it non-threatening, each participant has to find out something about the person they introduce that no one else in the room knows. This usually ends up being quite hilarious and frees up the larger group.

If there are more than 20 participants in the room, have them share the information in smaller groups to save time and ask each group to report the most unusual thing they discovered about one of their members.
Family Feud

Use the TV game show “Family Feud” as a format. Ask a question such as, “What are the top five things parents like to hear from a teacher?” Answers will vary.

Follow up with another question, “What do parents NOT want to hear from a teacher?” Answers will vary.

Write down all responses. Debrief as appropriate.

Prisoners, Vacationers, Consumers and Adventurers

There are four types of participants in most PD sessions:

Make four signs labeled Prisoners, Vacationers, Consumers and Adventurers. Place the signs at four corners of the room. Read the following descriptions:

**Prisoners:** who are there against their will because their boss told them to show up.

**Vacationers:** who are there because training is like having time off from work – they are relaxed and renewed as a result of their attendance.

**Consumers:** who are trainees that have a specific learning agenda – “I really want to learn how to…”

**Adventurer:** who are like consumers but without a narrow, specific agenda.

Ask the participants to choose which role most closely resembles them.

Acknowledge each group in terms of how they identify with the 4 types.