ISBE Introduces Family Engagement Webinar Series

The Illinois State Board of Education's Division of Innovation and Improvement conducted a series of 60 minute Family Engagement Webinars as part of a statewide family engagement initiative. Each webinar in the 2012 series features practitioners from the 2011 Regional Summits. The practitioners share their experiences in the successful implementation of evidence-based family engagement strategies in their schools or districts. These Webinars are good tools for district staff, school staff, parent facilitators, and parents.

The following list of 2012 Webinars can be accessed at: [http://www.illinoisparents.org/Toolbox.htm](http://www.illinoisparents.org/Toolbox.htm)

Improving High School Family Engagement through Parent Support Centers - January 26, 2012

Anne Coffman, Director of Federal and State Programs from Community High School District 218, and the Title I team of district and building administrators will share how this district’s high schools have established on-site parent support centers to promote meaningful family engagement. They will explain how their full-time parent liaisons use these centers to welcome and reach out to diverse parent groups, integrate families into the school community, and build connections between parents and school staff. They will share strategies that have been successful in shifting the focus from nominal parent involvement to meaningful family engagement in their high schools.

Improving High School Family Engagement through Social and Emotional Learning - February 23, 2012

Recent studies have shown that learning improves when schools attend to the social and emotional needs of their students. Parents also need this kind of support and are eager to learn more about how they can connect to and support their kids. New Trier High School's Principal, Dr. Tim Dohrer, will explain how various school structures and initiatives offer support to students, parents, and staff in all four dimensions of schooling: academic, social, emotional, and physical. Their efforts have led to a large school that feels small, high levels of academic excellence, and energetic school community that is engaged and excited. Dr. Dohrer has worked in a variety of roles in education for over 20 years. For many of those years, he was an English and journalism teacher, student advisor, coach, club sponsor, and chair of many school-based committees and initiatives.

How to get Families Engaged in an Early Childhood Setting - March 2, 2012

We want families involved, but...What do we do? A closer look at increasing Family Engagement at School

You plan a great event – you even ordered pizza, but only 5 families showed up. What went wrong? Through this webinar, participants will

- Reflect on what they believe about family engagement and how this will impact what types of activities are planned for families.
- Discuss ways to increase your level of family engagement from 25% to over 80% of families participating as well as increase the number of parent volunteer hours at your school.
- Discuss providing targeted intervention strategies families may complete at home that include a “DVD” teaching module.
- Review implementation techniques that target hard to reach families and get all families involved

Participants will have practical ideas and renewed enthusiasm for family engagement within their school.
**Parent Involvement in High Poverty Schools** - March 22, 2012

Dr. Sandra Lewis will discuss how she has been able to change the culture and climate of the school and community from one that was infiltrated with gangs and low achievement to one that has received many awards for its outstanding school climate, innovative programs, and academic achievement. As a member of the same community for over forty years, and now principal at Harold Washington Elementary for the past 22 years, she has become an icon in the community. Dr. Lewis has formed partnerships all over the city to bring quality programs and projects to her students and families and has been highlighted on radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and other media. She will share how she attends to the social and emotional needs of students and their parents/families, and the unique and effective approaches she’s implemented to raise student achievement.

**Very Important Parents (VIP): Utilizing Parents during the School Day as a Resource to Improve Reading Outcomes for Students** - April 26, 2012

Adam Zbrozek, the principal of a Title I building in St. Charles Community Unit School District will share how the building has engaged parents in on-site support of reading improvement efforts with students during the instructional day. Mr. Zbrozek will discuss how and why the program was developed, how parents were engaged in the work, what staff development occurred along the journey, lessons learned, and successes. Strategies for embedding a program like this will be shared as well as data showing the impact this program has had on student learning. Participants will hear the benefits of engaging parents during the school day in meaningful work with students.

**Involving at Risk Families in RtI supports with an ELL Focus** - May 10, 2012

Sandy Anderson

The Individual Problem Solving Team of Oak Terrace School (74% low income, Latino, ELL) will share its approach which involves parents to help close the gap for the most vulnerable students. The documentation of the approach includes a scope of intervention matrix, research from UCLS, referral form and meeting note templates. The processes include the consideration of potential barriers to learning, meeting with families and follow up, community supports, midyear of review of cases, and modifying intervention plans. The success of this approach is measured by the achievement of the children and the increased participation of families in our school.