

Final Report on Baseline Data Analysis and Recommendations from the Distinguished Teacher in Residence (DTiR) Grant in Collaboration with CSU San Marcos

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Part 1: School Wide Parent Organization and Participation:

Graduate student Elizabeth O'Brien contacted lead members of each of the school wide parent organizations to obtain information regarding purpose, membership (selection) and activities. The following are the analysis and recommendations of that study.

Analysis:

Foundation:

The foundation is a small board of about 15 people: some parents and some teachers. The group is small but highly committed to funding the arts programs. They do such things as host golf tournaments, run giving drives and apply for grants. There are attendance records for the board members who are elected officials, but they have never kept track of parent attendance. They usually try to reach outside of the school community to do fundraising. Information pertaining to the Foundation is posted on the school website. The message welcomes parents to participate, obtain further information or make a donation. Both the Foundation and PTA sponsor a school-wide newsletter that is accessible via the website in English and Spanish.

PTA:

The PTA consists of 2 parts, the board that are elected officials and the association, which are mostly parent volunteers. There are monthly board meeting and tri-annual association meetings. There also have a volunteer database of parents the organization can call upon when needed at certain events. There are membership fees associated with joining the PTA that range from \$5-\$100. There is a membership form in both English and Spanish accessible on the school website that provides information on how to join. Attendance at association meetings is around 30 parents, with a very small percentage of those parents being Hispanic.

ELAC:

The English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) meets regularly to develop plans to support both children and their parents who are English Language Learners. A major goal of this committee is to increase parent involvement at the school and plan parent education activities of interest to parents. There are monthly ELAC meetings held in the staff lounge at the school where board members and some parents attend. Throughout the academic year, ELAC also sponsors Parent Information Nights, which address various topics such as CELDT/CST information, Homework help/tips, Reading Comprehension

tips, Motivating your child to read, and Positive Parenting nights. Information is presented in Spanish at these meetings so 100% of the parents in attendance are Hispanic.

Recommendations:

All three organizations welcome and encourage a larger membership via the school website by providing information in both English and Spanish. These organizations are a very important component of the school community. Based on the information that was available as well as the parent survey we believe these organizations can become an even stronger and more broad based component in consideration of the following recommendations:

- 1) Send information out about these organizations via the phone system since some parents may not have access to the Internet to view the school website;
- 2) Each organization should attempt to target their Parent Nights to more specifically meet the needs of the VAVPA parent base. Both increasing the frequency of the Parent Nights and providing childcare during the event may also contribute to better attendance numbers.
- 3) Increasing involvement and leadership by Latino parents in all three parent organizations by actively recruiting, welcoming and adapting the organizations to be even more open to their participation.

Note: All three recommendations might be one of the important focus roles of the School-wide Parent Leader suggested in Part 2 (could she/he be an ex-official member of each of these committees?)

Part 2 Parent Volunteers in the Classroom

Analysis:

Data analysis and recommendations based on parent volunteers in the classroom was collected from the Guest/Volunteer registry located at the front office by Graduate Student Elizabeth O'Brien. A sample of approximately three weeks was collected and assumed to be relatively representative of participation throughout the school year. The days with the most volunteers usually fall on Fridays. Overall there are roughly 20% less Hispanic parent volunteers than Non-Hispanic parent volunteers. This data collecting did not attempt to address what grade levels, subjects, amount of time, nor the specificity or expertise addressed during this volunteer work.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Non-Hispanic</u>
3/17/2011	6	5
3/18/2011	11	5
3/21/2011	2	2
3/22/2011	1	2
3/23/2011	2	5

3/24/2011	2	4
3/25/2011	11	4
4/11/2011	2	5
4/12/2011	2	4
4/13/2011	6	5
4/14/2011	1	5
4/15/2011	5	10
4/18/2011	1	2
4/19/2011	3	3
4/20/2011	4	6
4/21/2011	0	6
4/22/2011	5	7
4/25/2011	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	67	83 = 150/18 (days)= 8.3 per day

Recommendations:

Parent participation in the classroom is not always possible but it should be greatly encouraged and welcomed as potentially a great asset for the teacher, the students and the parents. Teacher needs and specific training are crucial factors to consider when addressing this issue. With only about 8 parent volunteers (average) per day participating in a school of about 35 teachers there is significant potential for increasing both the quantity and quality of volunteering in the classroom. Based on the data regarding actual participation over a representative period as well as data and comments from the parent survey (where 40% of the English Speaking parents and 25% of the Spanish Speakers suggested they would be willing/able to assist in the classroom)

It is recommended in order to potentially increase both the quantity and quality of parent involvement in the classrooms that it would be important to:

1) Recruit a representative, volunteer, individual class parent leader (for each class K-8) who in collaboration with the school wide parent leader (see below) would: a) assist in getting recommendations from the teacher re. specific needs such as type of assistance (what times, what days, what types); b) contact all parents to encourage/recruit specific types of involvement (inside /outside the class) and see when and if they can volunteer to help (before/during or after school) and c) create a general master schedule for the teacher so there would be regular, on-going expectations that address specific teacher requests/needs. Obviously some training of parents would be a component of this (see below).

2) Create a volunteer position of school wide parent leader to a) meet with and assist the individual classroom parent leaders; b) coordinate /make recommendations to the principal on types of training that would be beneficial to maximize parent time in the classroom (how to tutor, assist in math/reading, general classroom expectations etc.); c) seek strategies to increase all parent involvement but especially Latino parent involvement since this appears relatively low compared to the overall school population.

Part 3: Teacher Survey on parental communication and involvement at VAVPA

The pre-survey for Teachers was constructed with the assistance of the CSUSM team and with recommendations from the DSLT committee. It was placed on Survey Monkey in early April 2011 with assistance from Rachel Rott. There were 32 respondents from all grade levels K-8. There are approximately 35 teachers so this is a 90% + response rate. The following is an analysis of that survey as well as recommendations based on those findings from the data.

Analysis and Recommendations:

It is of note that 63% of the teachers at VAVPA have 16 years or more of teaching, which is a very high level of experience. These are the actual questions with an overview of the response with recommendations based on those responses:

Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate with parents? How often do you use each?

- 1) **75% of teachers use personal letters home at least 3 times a year**
- 2) 50% use newsletters at least 3 times a year
- 3) 60% use the phone at least once a month
- 4) 65% use email at least once a month
- 5) Only 18 % have a teacher web page
- 6) 71% have a teacher-parent meeting at least once a month

Recommendations:

- 1) Make the Universal Call system available to all teachers as well as formalize a listing of all parent cell phone/landline numbers for each teacher (with appropriate training). Teachers commented that in particular they did not have or know in particular many of the Latino parents telephone numbers making it impossible to communicate this way. In addition, bilingual liaisons could assist in making calls or leaving messages in Spanish for those teachers who are not bilingual (another issue raised in the survey).
- 2) Construct a list of all parent email addresses for each teacher. Many parents may not have access to a computer (and therefore email address). Discussion in the DSLT meetings addressed this issue with the possible solution of the school library being opened for parents to a) learn how to use the computer for this type of communication and issuing them an email address to access teacher communication and web pages.
- 3) School Wide teacher training in the use of technology to construct web pages in an effort to communicate with parents regarding school curriculum, homework, and invitations to attend school and class functions etc.
- 4) Initiation of Parent Teacher or Triad Model (with principal) meetings introduced earlier in the year as suggestion in DSLT meetings. By providing a systemic format, earlier in the year for all participants will be on the same page and parents will be provided with specific information about student progress,

potential remediation, ideas for parent assistance and positive feedback about their son or daughter,

Question 2: If a Universal Call-Out system were available to you (like Mary Contreras uses to make informational calls to families) to reach the parents of your students, for which of the following purposes would you most likely use it?

An overwhelming number of teachers said that if available and training was provided they would use this system for the following: academic information (72%), informing parents of school functions (72%), seeking parent assistance in classroom (66%), informing parents of positive student behavior (in particular) (54%). These responses and the teacher comments both support the previous recommendations from Question 1 to 1) make the system and training available to all teachers and 2) provide all parent phone numbers to them; 3) provide bilingual liaisons to assist with messages

Question 3: Which of the following teacher-parent communication systems would you most like to have (assume you will have assistance with set-up and learning to use them)?

The top responses for individual teachers (Most or very important to have): List of parent emails (83%); phone numbers (81%) and a bilingual translator/ liaison (82%).

Recommendations: This supports recommendations from both previous responses to questions 1 and 2 i.e.

- 1) The importance of providing teachers with all parent email and
- 2) Phone numbers (landline/cell phone)
- 3) Translators/bilingual liaison to assist in these communication processes.

Question 4: What systemic, school-wide strategies do you think would be most helpful in facilitating parental involvement at VAVPA?

The top responses for School Wide strategies (Most or very important to have): Bilingual liaison (96%); Workshops for parents (ex. on parenting skills, assisting with homework and proper nutrition) (87%); Basic English classes for parents (86%); parent training as classroom assistants (60%) or (90% if you include important).

Recommendations:

- 1) Consider funding for a parent bilingual liaison position to coordinate communication with parents and assist in the training or coordination of

training for parents (in parenting, enhancing classroom assistants and workshops in basic English).

- 2) Consider organizations such as PIQE (Parents Involved in Quality Education to provide in school workshops for parents on the importance of involvement in their son or daughters education)

Question #5: What additional comments or recommendations do you have to assist the DSLT team and the CSUSM team, in terms of increasing parental involvement? Please feel free to expand on your own personal strategies for communicating with the families of your students, or the roadblocks you feel keep you from a free flow of communication with parents.

The following are comments from 12 of the teachers participating:

My weekly news is a great way to keep parents informed and is a great to ask for support when I need it.

Parents should be required to volunteer a minimum of twenty hours per school year in or out of the classroom as being part of VAVPA, an arts school of choice.

Remember to communicate with parents, equally or more, the positive behaviors you see in their child. Positivity goes a long way!

Making sure that our Spanish speaking families have a safe harbor at our school when volunteering or coming to performances. I think illegal immigrant parents are afraid to help or attend functions because they think they will be deported.

Invite Latino Spanish speaking parents (which end up being mostly moms) who are already known on campus to be involved more, then make their presence visible - say out by the front gate before school or at dismissal, (i.e. holding a poster for an upcoming event, or greeting people) so other parents can see their involvement. They MUST be visible to others, to let the others know, it's okay to volunteer/to be on campus more.

I wish I knew how to speak Spanish.

We have come up with great ideas as a staff, I just don't see them being implemented? Parent trainings or workshops? sometimes its' the same teachers doing all the work?

Communication is a key component of communication with our students' parents, and I often cannot speak with my students' parents without scheduling the aid of an interpreter. Having someone available to interpret any time of day when needed would

be fantastic.

It is difficult for teachers who don't speak Spanish to communicate with parents. Are middle school report cards still in English?

We need email addresses for more parents in Aeries. We also need to keep the phone numbers current.

The biggest roadblock is the language barrier

The biggest barrier for parent communication for me is not being able to speak Spanish. Almost all of my students' parents speak Spanish and very limited English. Having someone who can help translate a phone call or letter/note home would help with informing parents almost daily on how their child is doing in my class.

Recommendations:

- 1) Provide bilingual interpreters for email, phone, face to face
- 2) Increase parent involvement in the classroom by encouraging more involvement through role models, workshop trainings on parenting (see PIQE) and classroom assistance.
- 3) Teacher training in basic Spanish and diversity sensitivity.

Part 4: Parent Pre- Survey on communication and involvement at VAVPA

Two equivalent versions of the parent pre- survey (Spanish and English) were developed by the researchers from CSUSM in collaboration with the DSLT committee. The survey was adapted by one developed and utilized previously by Dr. Diaz-Greenberg in another school. She was assisted in adapting the Spanish version by graduate student Lucy Lopez. This was distributed to the parents via the teachers and the data entered and analyzed on Google Docs by Graduate student Tom Lueker. Approximately 550 surveys were returned which is about 70% of the total for the school, which is a very high percentage response rate for these types of surveys.

Analysis and Recommendations (for each question):

#1 How do you usually communicate with your child's teachers?

An overwhelming majority of parents replied that they usually communicate in person with the teacher (81%Spanish speakers vs 71% English Speaker). Interestingly, only a small percentage of Latino parents report communication by email (6% vs 45%). supporting the previous recommendation as noted in Part 3. This is also true for phone communication where only 28% vs 41% respectively use this mode of communication again in support of a previous teacher recommendation.

Recommendations:

- 1) Obtain and distribute to teachers updated phone numbers of parents and make use of the Universal call system to increase communication from teacher to parent.
- 2) Update and make available to teachers email addresses when available. In addition create a program (through the school library to provide some assistance in getting email access through school computers for parents)
- 3) Make use of the triad parent-teacher conference model to customize the process of these conferences.

#2 How have you been involved with the school in the past?

The majority of parents report communication with the teacher as the main form of involvement (68% Spanish vs 82% English). Parents report involvement in school meetings, assisting teachers in classroom and other as 42%, vs 36%, 30% vs 44% (over-reported??) and 11% vs 36% respectively.

Recommendations:

- 1) Importance of face-to-face contact with parents and as suggested in #3 above formalizes the process (Parent-Teacher Triad).
- 2) The data above suggest more parents report involvement in classroom than the data collected from the sign in sheets. Perhaps this involvement is more random and infrequent and recommend the previous suggestion to formalize this process (make use of individual classroom parent volunteer and school wide classroom parent volunteer to formalize the process).

#3) Topics that would interest me to help my child:

The highest response to this question was “How to help my child succeed in school’ 81% Spanish and 68% English. The next highest response was 63% and 50% respectively to ‘Educational activities to do with my child at home’ and the third highest was ‘Bullying prevention programs’ 52% and 42% respectively.

Recommendations:

- 1) These high response rates suggest both the desire and need for some formalize trainings for parents in the area of practical needs of how they can assist their child to be successful in school and at home. Approximately ½ of parents would like bully prevention intercession programs suggesting a potential issue at VAVPA. Organizations like PIQE could provide formalized trainings in at least some of these. These should be made available at times appropriate for most of the parents.
- 2) Increased communication through teachers, email, phone and parent organizations can distribute information about these trainings

#4) I would like to know more about these school related topics

The highest response by Spanish speaking parents was in wanting to know more about ESL classes (60%) vs only 6% for English speaking. The highest for English speaking parents was 47% vs 55% (second highest for Spanish Speakers). Of note is that there was a number of checked responses above 40% for Spanish speakers (7 of 15) yet only (1 of 15) for English Speakers.

Recommendations:

- 1) The data suggests there is a large discrepancy between (Spanish speakers and English speakers) in their desire to obtain more information related to the school and their children. This is in support of many of the many previous recommendations: increased involvement of Spanish Speaking parents in school wide organizations, increased opportunities communication between parent and teacher via conferences, email, phone and increased use of parent trainings (as suggested in #3 above)

#5) Volunteering in the school is a way that parents can get involved and contribute to their children's education and academic success. In which areas would you like to help as a volunteer??

Responses from this question suggest willingness and ability (time wise) to assist in the classroom from both Spanish Speakers and English Speakers. The top responses were (Spanish Speakers vs English): 32% vs 42% (Prepare materials for the teachers). 29% vs 43% (work in the classroom) and 25% vs 44% (supervise children on fieldtrips). The highest response for English speakers was 52% (attend special events at school) vs only 20% for Spanish speakers.

Recommendations:

- 1) There appears from the responses that both Spanish Speaking and English Speaking parents are willing to become involved directly with the teacher to assist in a variety of ways. The actual % participation vs willingness to participate is in sharp contrast thus supporting the earlier suggestions of creating a classroom parent volunteer and school wide parent volunteer positions to coordinate the creation of a master volunteer schedule.
- 2) With the assistance of the classroom parent volunteers and school wide parents for various work in the classroom.

#6) To learn about participating in any of these educational programs, I would like meetings to be held

Spanish Speaking parents favored afternoon informational meetings (after school?) 45% vs 17% while English Speaking parents favored evening 48% vs 21%. This is a fairly

significant difference. There may be a variety of reasons for this difference (travel to school, jobs, desire to be home in evenings etc.)

Recommendations:

- 1) The data suggests that careful attention be paid to parents in scheduling informational meetings perhaps alternating or offering similar versions in the afternoons and evenings. It appears that increases in involvement will result from this careful planning

#7) I will need childcare at the school to allow me time to become involved:

A significant % of parents from both Spanish Speakers (36%) and English Speakers (26%) suggest that they could use childcare in order to become more involved in the school. This is a significant number if you assume 800 parents at the school this would mean around 250 parents would become more involved if childcare were provided.

Recommendations:

- 1) Coordinate with the high school to collaborate with their service-learning organizations to create a program of childcare at various critical meeting times.
- 2) Coordinate with the Parent Organizations, School Wide Parent Volunteer and Administration in developing alternative plans for childcare.

Part 5: Student Success, Achievement and Attitude

The 2011 standardized test scores in Reading and Mathematics were not available when this report was produced. These and possibly other measures of achievement (such as benchmark tests or teacher reports/observations) and student attitudes (number of office referrals, teacher reports/observation) might be used to compare Year 2011 (Baseline) with Year 2012 (Post) to see if increasing parent communication and involvement through the various strategies suggested above can have an impact on student success in VAVPA. In addition a post teacher and parent survey completed at the end of the 2012 academic year might provide information related to perceived progress in increasing parental communication and involvement.

Recommendations:

- 1) If possible it would be valuable to compare not only standardized tests from 2011 to 2012 but also other school-wide positive indicators that may be impacted by increased parent involvement such as behavioral referrals, teacher citizenship reports and grades and other measures.