

Parent Volunteers At Your Child's School



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Parent engagement is vital to the culture of a school. Too often, parent engagement is thought of in terms of getting parents to the school for a presentation, or engaging in a fundraiser to fund new classroom technologies. As we all know, parents are our students' first teachers, and it is the role of the school to provide opportunities for parents to engage in meaningful ways. Just like our students, all of the parents at a school bring their own set of skills and their own, varied needs. Therefore, parent engagement cannot just be a "one-size-fits-all" approach where parents are invited to campus but never asked to participate in the work of educating our children. A parent engagement program needs to be varied, stimulating, and useful to both school programming and initiatives and also for the parents showing up to support.

Parents Are Valued At Bert Corona Charter School

Over the last few years at Bert Corona Charter School, we have been focusing our our efforts to plan strategically for each school year. Over the summer, our school leadership team dove into our data to analyze our effectiveness in a variety of areas. From our data dive, we identified areas of strength, as well as areas of growth and equity gaps. Before creating our plan, we held focus groups with students, parents, and teachers to help gather feedback about how we could improve. Our effort for the 2024 school year will be to build upon our strengths so we can address our areas of need and gaps as a community. Our YPICS theme this year is From Good to Great: Better Together. We will be working to engage our students, parents, and community members to help us continue to grow as a school community and to support our students on the pathway to success!

Through our work with parents over the summer, we have come up with four major ways in which our parents can get involved to help us continue our efforts to address equity gaps in education and at our school: committee work, regular analysis and feedback sessions, informational/educational workshops, and parents as paras (parents supporting our students in the classroom). This is our current plan for engagement, but many schools and districts have great resources and opportunities for their parents. They may look similar to those at Bert Corona Charter, or they may be slightly different.

Questions To Ask Your Child's School

No matter what parent engagement looks like at your school, there are questions you can ask your school leaders and staff that will help you engage meaningfully. Depending on where your child's school is in their parental engagement plan, you may even be able to drive improvements in their parent programming. These questions will help you better understand how your child's school operates and will help you engage in ways that will be beneficial to your child and the entire school community:

What opportunities are there for parents to share our voice about educational programming at this school?

What types of workshops do you offer to help parents support learning at home?

What does your social-emotional support system look like at this school? What do I need to know to help support my child's development at home?

What types of resources can I access to help my child if he/she/they are struggling academically?

How will progress and outcome data be shared with parents this year?

When will I have an opportunity to speak with my child's teacher(s)? How can support success in the classroom?

What types of volunteer opportunities are there for parents at our school?

How will we celebrate growth and achievement as a community this year?

Whatever the engagement program or opportunity, parent engagement is key to student success. Look for opportunities to participate and show up at your child's school whenever possible. Your child, and the school, need and appreciate your support.