

How to Form School Partnerships – Part 2



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Last week, we described how Kyle was able to overcome an enormous power struggle by:

Talking about previous successes and the current challenge of not being able to complete the assignment

Expressing feelings of frustration, anger, sadness, and fear from the student and his parents

Meeting with the teacher and the student together to brainstorm a satisfying solution

Following-up with Kyle to ensure that he felt supported by his parents' coaching to achieve success

Being open to try an alternative solution to a difficult problem

Having parents and the student recognize that they were caught in a power struggle and that the parents were owning the student's problem

Sample Problem Solution Worksheet

The sample problem solution worksheet below can be customized to meet your own personal needs. It illustrates how Kyle and his parents were able to talk with the teacher effectively and with each other to resolve a significant academic success challenge.

Problem-solving Component	Kyle's Prospective	Parents' Prospective	Teacher's Prospective
Consider previous successes and challenges relevant to the current problem.	Kyle has felt successful and confident about his past writing assignments.	Although Kyle has a successful writing background, he is now refusing to complete his final project for 8 th grade graduation.	Kyle is a successful student but is anxious about the current assignment and his parents are afraid he will fail.

Clarify the problem when considering each person's role.	Kyle is afraid to fail when using the APA style of writing.	Kyle's parents are panicked because Kyle is refusing to complete this mandatory requirement.	Kyle and his parents must relax and problem-solve an effective solution that ensures success.
Consider each person's feelings about the situation.	Kyle is anxious, afraid, and paralyzed to complete the assignment.	His parents are frustrated, angry, overwhelmed, and feel that they have lost control.	His teacher must resolve this power struggle so Kyle can have the confidence to succeed and complete the assignment.

Brainstorm solutions.	1. Kyle will fail and be in trouble with his parents and the school. 2. His parents or the teacher must help Kyle write the paper. 3. Peer class reviewers can help Kyle complete the assignment.	1. Kyle will fail the course. 2. His parents will help him write the paper or hire a tutor to help complete the project. 3. The teacher can help solve the problem.	1. Kyle must become confident. 2. His parents must relax. 3. The teacher must come up with a reasonable solution with peer editors.
Make a plan that is agreeable to all and confirm that it is acceptable.	Kyle will use peer editors to help him complete the APA stylistic requirements.	Kyle will use peer editors to help him complete the APA stylistic requirements.	Kyle will use peer editors to help him complete the APA stylistic requirements.

Follow-up as needed per a specific timeline.	Kyle will check-in with his parents daily and his teacher weekly.	Kyle will check-in with his parents daily and his teacher weekly.	Kyle will check-in with his parents daily and his teacher weekly.
Reflect after the problem has been resolved with an agreeable solution.	Kyle is confident that he has the skills to succeed in Honors English and has learned new skills.	Kyle's parents appreciated the teacher's solution and Kyle's growth during the project.	The teacher was successful in finding a solution that benefitted Kyle's learning challenge and ultimate success.

Teacher Support of Student's Learning Challenges

When considering this case study, many teachers may find that they soon become part of the problem instead of facilitating a solution. Sometimes, a teacher will

provide the parents with a daily or weekly update that continues to reinforce the problem behavior at school. If the parent and student are unable to resolve a challenging school problem with the teacher, the student and parent should approach a school counselor or the principal to provide added guidance and support. Sometimes, the school may need to convene a Student Success Team (S.S.T.) meeting with key stakeholders to help the student succeed and receive all possible interventions as needed.

Occasionally, the problem may be an indication of an undiagnosed learning disability. If the teacher and school's staff suspect a latent learning challenge, they will ask the parents' permission to have their child evaluated for special education services and interventions. Many gifted children remain undiagnosed until they enter middle or high school when the demands for reading, writing, and math become much more complex. Parents can also seek added support for their child by contacting their medical doctor for referrals in addition to county-managed and community-based organizations. For added support in how to access services, parents can contact Parents Helping Parents, a nationally recognized parent-led advocacy support group at www.php.com.

Effective Problem-Solving Strategies

Much success supporting your children's learning needs through effective problem-solving strategies that include:

Effective communication skills

Defining the Problem

Understanding specific roles and responsibilities
related to the problem

Identifying solutions that meets the needs of all