Family/School Partnership Checklist*

The purpose of the inventory is to identify how family-friendly your school is, as well as how your school could improve. Each item has been selected because scientific studies have found it to be related to family/school partnerships. While no school has all the family-friendly supports listed, it is often possible to develop such supports when citizens like you think they are important.

Directions:

(1) Carefully examine the rating scale below before completing this checklist. As you review each item, please circle the response that comes closest to describing your school. A score of 4 or 5 indicates that the activity or approach is strong and prominent. A score of 1, 2, or 3 indicates that the activity is not yet part of the school's program, or needs improvement. A score of 0 is for those items you are unsure of or do not have information about. You are encouraged to answer as many items as you can to the best of your ability – your opinions count!

(2) We are asking you to rate whether each item exists in your school, not its "quality". For example, when the question reads "Hosts regular social occasions or events where parents and school staff can get to know each other", the answer you give should be based upon whether or not this occurs at your school, and how often – NOT whether those events are fun, well attended, etc.

(3) Prior to each section of the checklist, you will see a section for school-specific data. When data is available, these items are completed based on surveys of parents and teachers from middle schools that are participating in the Families, Schools, and Communities United for Students (US) Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. If this data is unavailable for your school, the items will be left blank and you should answer the questions as best you can without this information.

0 – Don't Know:	Unsure whether this occurs at our school; don't have enough information about this.
1 – Never:	Strategy doesn't happen at our school.
2 – Rarely:	Occurs in only one or two classes. Receives isolated use or little time. Clearly not emphasized in our school's parental involvement plan.
3 – Sometimes:	Occurs in some classes. Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis across grades. Not a major component of our school's parental involvement plan.
4 – Often:	Occurs in many but not all classes/grade levels. Receives significant time and emphasis. A fairly major component of our school's parental involvement plan.
5 – Frequently:	Occurs in most or all classes/grade levels (i.e., school – wide). Receives significant time and emphasis. A highly major component of our school's parental involvement plan.

Family/School Partnership Checklist

I. PARENTING: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Data from _____ Middle School Parents

Percent of parents who say _____ Middle School does the following activities "very well" or "somewhat well."

_____% 1. Helps me understand my child's stage of development.

Data from _____ Middle School Teachers

Percent of _____ Middle School teachers who say the following programs are "not in place now, but are needed."

_____% 1. Workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning.

_____% 2. Workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children.

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
1. Conducts workshops or provides Information for parents on child or adolescent development. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths, and talents. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Provides families with information on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Respect the different cultures represented in our student population. a	0	1	2	3	4	5

What other Type I Parenting Activities exist at_____Middle School? Please list:

II. COMMUNICATING: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.

Data from _____ Middle School Parents

Percent of parents who say _____ Middle School does the following activities "very well" or "somewhat well."

_____% 1. Has a parent-teacher conference with me.

_____% 2. Sends home news about things happening at the school.

_____% 3. Sends home clear notices that I can read easily.

_____% 4. Tells me how my child is doing in school.

_____% 5. Contacts me if my child is having problems.

_____% 6. Gives me information about how report card grades are earned.

_____% 7. Contacts me if my child does something well or improves.

Data from _____ Middle School Teachers

Percent of _____ Middle School teachers who say the following programs are "not in place now, but are needed."

_____% 1. Communications from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.

_____% 2. Communications about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs.

_____% 3. Parent-teacher conferences with all families.

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
8. Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Develops communications with parents who do not speak or read English well, or need large type. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. Provides written communication in the language of the parents, and translators as needed. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. Has clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Conducts annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs, reactions to school programs, and satisfaction with their involvement at school and at home. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Conducts an orientation for new parents. A	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. a	0	1	2	3	4	5

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
16. Develops the school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
17. Contacts families of students having Academic or behavior problems. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, achievement levels, and report cards. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of family involvement and ways to build positive ties between school and home. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
22. Has a clear policy for informing non custodial parents about their children's performance and school events. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
23. Has teachers who are willing to meet outside school hours with parents who have jobs and cannot easily get away during the working day. B	0	1	2	3	4	5
24. Provides in-service or other training opportunities to help teachers communicate and collaborate with parents. b	0	1	2	3	4	5

What other Type II Communicating Activities exist at_____Middle School?
Please list:

III. VOLUNTEERING: Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Data from _____ Middle School Parents

Percent of parents who say _____ Middle School does the following activities "very well" or "somewhat well."

_____% 1. Asks me to help with fundraising.

_____% 2. Asks me to volunteer at school.

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
25. Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
26. Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and related topics. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
27. Creates flexible volunteering opportunities and schedules, enabling employed parents to participate. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
28. Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
29. Reduces barriers to parent participation (e.g., transportation, childcare). a	0	1	2	3	4	5
30. Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
31. Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
32. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (e.g., assisting in classroom, giving talks, leading activities, etc.) a	0	1	2	3	4	5
33. Makes space, resources, and staff support available for parents' school-related activities (e.g., copy machine, computer, a desk). b	0	1	2	3	4	5

What other Type III Volunteering Activities exist at _____ Middle School? Please list:

IV. LEARNING AT HOME: Provide information to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

Data from _____ Middle School Parents

Percent of parents who say _____ Middle School does the following activities "very well" or "somewhat well."

_____% 1. Tells me what skills my child needs to learn each year.

_____% 2. Assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things being learned in class.

_____% 3. Explains how to check my child's homework.

Data from _____ Middle School Teachers

Percent of _____ Middle School teachers who say the following programs are "not in place now, but are needed."

_____% 1. Information for parents on how to help their children with specific skills and subjects.

_____% 2. Information for parents on how to monitor homework.

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
34. Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
35. Provides information to families on required skills in all subjects. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
36. Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
37. Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to read with their child. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
38. Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
39. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
40. Requires parent approval on students' choice of classes. b	0	1	2	3	4	5

What other Type IV Learning at Home Activities exist at _____ Middle School? Please list:

V. DECISION MAKING: Include parents in school decisions to develop leaders and representatives.

Data from _____ Middle School Parents

Note: ___% of parents never attended a PTA/PTO meeting in the 2002-2003 school year at _____ Middle School.

Percent of parents who say _____ Middle School does the following activities "very well" or "somewhat well."

_____% 1. Invites me to PTA/PTO meetings.

_____% 2. Includes parents on school committees such as curriculum, budgets, and school improvement.

Data from _____ Middle School Teachers

Percent of _____ Middle School teachers who say the following programs are "not in place now, but are needed."

_____% 1. Involvement by families in PTA/PTO leadership, other committees, or other decision-making roles.

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
			Rating			
41. Has active PTA, PTO [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
42. Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
43. Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
44. Involves parents in organized, ongoing, and timely ways in planning, reviewing, and improving school programs. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
45. Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
46. Includes parent leaders from all racial ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
47. Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
48. Includes students (with parents) in decision-making groups. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
49. Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5
50. Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. [a]	0	1	2	3	4	5

What other Type V Decision Making Activities exist at _____ Middle School? Please list:

VI. COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Data from _____ Middle School Parents

Percent of parents who say _____ Middle School does the following activities "very well" or "somewhat well."

_____% 1. Provides information on community services that I may want to use.

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
51. Provides a resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
52. Involves families in locating and using community resources. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
53. Works with local businesses, industries, libraries, parks, museums, and other organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
54. Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
55. Opens its building for community use after school hours. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
56. Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
57. Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. a	0	1	2	3	4	5
58. Employers in the community give parents time off to meet with teachers or for school activities.	0	1	2	3	4	5

What other Type VI Collaborating with the Community Activities exist at _____ Middle School? Please list:

VII. Physical Characteristics of our school: Provide a convenient, welcoming, and user friendly environment for parents and other visitors.

Rating

Our School	Don't Know	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
59. Has office personnel who greet parents (in person or on the phone) in a friendly, courteous way. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
60. Has signs clearly posted which warmly welcome parents and visitors. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
61. Makes directions available for parents and visitors to find their way around the school. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
62. Hosts regular social occasions or events where parents and school staff can get to know each other. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
63. Welcomes parent observers in classrooms. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
64. Has a library that is accessible for parents. b	0	1	2	3	4	5
65. Has ample and convenient parking available for parents when they visit the school. B	0	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Important School Characteristics: